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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

THE LAND OF AN UNCONQUERABLE IDEAL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HADRIAN'S WALL

THE SAXON SHORE

THE BODLEY HEAD

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

THE LAND OF AN UNCONQUERABLE IDEAL

BY JESSIE MOTHERSOLE

WITH SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR
IN COLOUR AND BLACK AND WHITE

PRAVDA VÍTĚZÍ
("TRUTH WINS")

Motto of the Hussites, in the fifteenth century,
now the motto of the Republic of Czechoslovakia

LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LIMITED
NEW YORK: DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

First Published in 1926

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY MORRISON AND GIBB LTD., EDINBURGH

Hear and give heed! When, when did land or nation
See, without persecution, Freedom born?
When did the many ever find salvation,
Till some had known the spitting and the scorn?

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

"Parchment will fail, the sword will fail; it is only the spiritual nature of man that can be triumphant."

From President Coolidge's Inaugural Address.

PREFACE

THREE years ago I was asked by a London firm of publishers to write a travel-book on "a country of Europe," the choice of a country to be left to me. My thoughts at once turned to Czechoslovakia, for the country of Hus had always attracted me, and Professor Masaryk's lectures in London during the war had stimulated my interest in this part of Central Europe.

I made my choice accordingly, and proposed that I should spend some months in the towns and villages of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, painting the people and their surroundings. The publishers did not receive my choice as enthusiastically as I had expected. They said it would be impossible for me to stay in the villages, especially in Slovakia, as the people were very uncivilized. "And besides," they added, "no one in England wants to hear about the Slavs." Every word they said helped to confirm my impression that there was plenty of room for such a book as I proposed to write, and so the interview ended. Five minutes later I was having an interview with another publisher, and this book is the result.

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This brief survey of a very wide field is not intended for the thousands of English readers who already know Czechoslovakia well; to them it has nothing new to offer but the pictures and the point of view.

It is written rather for the millions to whom the young-old State is nothing but a new name on the map, and who would perhaps be puzzled to put their finger on it there.

After spending some months painting in the country, at different seasons of the year, travelling from one end to the other, and mixing with the people in the most unfrequented parts, I have tried not only to give some idea of the charm of the natural surroundings, but also to gather together in the same volume enough of the story of the people to waken a

sympathetic interest in their ideals ; to show that in the past they have been pioneers on the upward path of humanity, and that in the present the same spirit is at work amongst them.

Through all the vicissitudes of the race, in one respect they have been rich, and that is in the succession of men of lofty character who have risen to lead and to inspire them : Venceslas, Charles IV, Hus, Chelčický, George of Poděbrad, Komenský, Palacký, Masaryk, and many of lesser note, they follow each other down the pages of history ; and each of them has perceived a goal far beyond and above mere material power and prosperity—each of them has discerned, dimly or clearly, the unconquerable ideal.

In a bold attempt to epitomize the history of the race, I have only dwelt on those more outstanding events which seemed necessary to my subject, but I have strung them together on a slender thread to make their relationship to each other clear.

I hope that these notes may lead many to study the history in one or more of the authoritative works in the list at the end ; and that the brief account of the country will encourage them to see it for themselves.

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The area included in the new State is only slightly less than that of the island of Great Britain.

The name " Czechoslovakia," has been considered rather a drawback as far as England is concerned, for it looks formidable to English-speaking people, and it is well known that an Englishman will have recourse to any amount of circumlocution rather than attempt a foreign word which he does not know how to pronounce. If it were a question of having dealings with one of two foreign countries, other things being equal, he would probably choose the one with the least dangerous name !

Nearly every one in England knows by this time the sound of " Czechoslovakia," but for the few that remain I will say that the *Cz* is pronounced exactly like *Ch* in *Church*, and the *ch*, like *ch* in Scottish *loch*. But no English person would be

criticized for calling the country " Checkoslovakia," and indeed that (or the irreverent form of " Checko," for short) is what is generally heard.

The Czechs themselves do not use *Cz* at all in their written language, but *Č*. Thus the Czech way of writing *Czech* is *Čech*. The *Cz* is an older form, still used in Poland, and it is easier for English printers.

The spelling, Czechoslovakia, without a hyphen, is the recognized official form, referring to the Republic as a whole, including not only Bohemia and Slovakia, but also Silesia, Moravia and Ruthenia. The adjective is *Czechoslovak*, but the hyphened form, Czecho-Slovak, would be used in such a phrase as " Czecho-Slovak unity," *i.e.* unity as between Czechs and Slovaks specifically, and in similar cases.

The terms, Československo (" Czechoslovakia ") and Československý (" Czechoslovak ") were used by distinguished Slovak writers, such as Kollár and Hurban, as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, and never with a hyphen.

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Since I did not want to follow the beaten track, but to get as much as possible in touch with the people, one of my first steps was to begin to study the language under Dr Otakar Vočadlo, at King's College. And here I must add how much I owe also to Dr Vočadlo's public lectures, and to his unfailing kindness in answering my many questions.

Except to those who already know Russian or some other Slavonic language, Czech and Slovak are not at all easy to learn. I only succeeded in learning just enough to make myself understood by the people in the villages. When I could not understand what they said, I used to ask them to write it in my sketch-book, and that nearly always answered. Slovak grammar is much simpler than Czech ; there are fewer " exceptions." I used to " simplify " my Czech through ignorance, and the consequence was that the Czech villagers would sometimes think I was speaking Slovak, while the Slovak villagers would think I was speaking Czech !

. . . . . .

I have called the people of this land "pioneers," and such they have been in many directions. In the chapters that follow it will be seen how they were not only pioneers in the work of the Reformation, but also in an early attempt to form a League of Nations, in the introduction of modern educational methods, in efforts towards promoting universal peace, and in the condemnation of war, as a crime which punished the victor equally with the vanquished. "Can it ever be right to fight?" is a question which has exercised their thinkers over and over again down the centuries, and they made this the subject of novels and dramas even before the Great War brought it into general prominence. The Bible was translated into Czech before it was translated into English, and the very first hymn-book in a native tongue was in Czech. The first picture-book for children was the work of Komenský, and attained an international reputation.

The Czechs have always been enthusiasts on education, carrying on the tradition of their revered Charles IV, the founder of Prague University. Even in tiny village schools, with a mere handful of children, one can to-day recognize this spirit in teacher and scholars alike, and one may see inscribed over a very modest door the dictum of Komenský: "The school is the workshop of humanity."

. . . . . .

Musical culture is remarkably thorough and widespread. Music formed part of the curriculum of Prague University from the first, and has long been considered a necessary subject in every village school. It enters far more into the daily lives of the people than it does in England, and this accounts for the fame attained by the male choirs who visited London a few years ago, teachers from Prague and from Moravia, whose singing took London by storm.

Good music is always to be heard in Prague, under very favourable conditions; while the high standard of art, in both opera and drama, at the National Theatre, has been

repeatedly acclaimed by the greatest experts of other countries.

It is hardly necessary to mention names of such international renown as Smetana, Dvořák, Suk, Ševčík, Janáček, and Kubelík, nor to remind Londoners of their beloved Czech Quartet.

Londoners owe a special debt to another type of Czech artist—to Wenceslas Hollar, the famous etcher, for the beautiful plates he made of seventeenth-century London, as it appeared before the Great Fire. Hollar was born in Prague, but he lived and worked in England—chiefly in London—for thirty-two years of his life. He was buried in 1677 in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and a tablet to his honour has recently been erected in the church.

Another distinguished refugee from Bohemia in the seventeenth century was George Ritschel, who undertook research work for Komenský at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and who published in England a scholarly work on metaphysics. Later, he held with honour the perpetual curacy of Hexham, Northumberland, for twenty-seven years, and was buried in the choir of the Abbey Church, in 1683.

In our own day, a still more famous exile, who was to become the first President of Czechoslovakia, was living in Hampstead and lecturing in London for nearly two years.

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Many laws which have been long advocated by groups of politicians in other countries have now been actually passed in Czechoslovakia, whose leaders have not feared to make experiments, at which the world at large looks on with interest, prepared to take example or warning. Proportional representation, the exaction of a capital levy, the redistribution of land, the abolition of titles, universal suffrage for both sexes and compulsory voting are some of the laws now in force, and without any disastrous results, though the capital levy has proved difficult to assess and to collect, and less profitable than was expected.

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NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION OF CZECH WORDS

THE chief stress is always on the first syllable.
An acute accent on a vowel lengthens it.

c = *ts*.
č = *ch* in church.
ch = *ch* in loch.
j = *y* in yet.
j (terminal) = *y* in boy.
š = *sh*.
ž = *z* in azure, or *j* in French *jour*.
ř = as if an *r* preceded a *ž*, and the two were sounded simultaneously.

d', *ň*, *t'* = as if a short *i* were inserted after the letter itself. For example, *ň* is pronounced like *ni* in *pinion*.

Other consonants are pronounced approximately as in English.

Vowels are pronounced like the Italian vowels. The pronunciation of the ordinary vowels is never slurred and never changes:

ě = as if a short *i* preceded the *e*.
ou = as in *soul*.

The *ř* is a difficult sound for foreigners. In Slovak its place is taken by a simple *r*.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

THE LAND OF AN UNCONQUERABLE IDEAL

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CHAPTER I

THE Republic of Czechoslovakia includes Bohemia, Moravia, Czech-Silesia, Slovakia, and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia—all of them ancient Slav lands which had become submerged in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The once famous and independent Kingdom of Bohemia had suffered sad eclipse for nearly three hundred years, ever since the Protestant tendencies of its people had brought them into conflict with the Hapsburgs, and with the forces of the Roman Catholic League. After their defeat near Prague in 1620, the Czechs were deprived of all their ancient rights, and their country became a mere appendage of Austria, with its development hindered by restrictive legislation. And yet Bohemia was the richest portion of the Empire, and the foundation on which the Hapsburg power was built.

Moravia in its present form has been united with Bohemia ever since the beginning of the eleventh century. Slovakia, which had been a part of Moravia, was, however, taken by the Magyars at that time. Silesia also was attached to Bohemia then, but it was not until the fourteenth century, in the reign of King John, that it became a constituent part of the Kingdom of Bohemia. The present Czech-Silesia is only a fragment of what was once a rich Bohemian land, second only in importance to Bohemia itself. The bulk of Silesia was wrested from Bohemia by Frederick the Great of Prussia in the eighteenth century, and is now divided between Germany and Poland.

The two Lusatias—the home of the smallest Slavonic people, the Lusatian Sorabs or Wends, nearest cousins to the Czechs—were also lost, and are now merged in Prussia and Saxony.

It is clear that for Czechoslovakia to lay claim to the lost portions of the former kingdom, which are now largely Germanized, would be as contrary to the principle of nationality as for Hungary to lay claim to those Slav lands which belonged to the feudal kingdom of Hungary, namely, Slovakia and Croatia.

. . . . . .

Slovakia, once part of Great Moravia, maintained a partial independence of Hungary in the fourteenth century, and again in the fifteenth, but in recent times it had suffered even more complete eclipse under Hungary than Bohemia had done under Austria. Europe at large had almost forgotten that such a people as the Slovaks existed, for before the War the great majority of them were completely shut off from ordinary opportunities of development and education.

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A glance at the map of Europe shows at once that Czechoslovakia deserves more than any other state to be known as "Central Europe." Indeed, the only way to draw a map of Europe from memory is to begin with a lozenge in the middle, and to label it Bohemia.

This central position accounts partly for the great importance of Bohemia and her capital, Prague, throughout the Middle Ages. All the trade routes passed through Prague, until, in the fifteenth century, the Bohemians were made for a time the outlaws of Europe on account of their stand for religious liberty, and their country was banned and avoided.

This central position, with no outlet to the sea, accounts also for the chequered history of Bohemia, for she has had to suffer aggressions from north, south, east and west. Lying mid-way between east and west, she has had throughout her history to make her choice between the influences of Western culture, and Western ideals, pointing to progress, freedom and con-

stitutional government, on the one hand, and Eastern influences, unprogressive in character, on the other; and she early chose to link herself with the West.

She has had to bear the brunt of attacks from the East, and has formed an important part of the Slavonic vanguard of European civilization against Tartars, Magyars and Turks. Adopting Western Christianity, she yet showed her independent activity of thought by becoming the first Protestant nation.

Culturally, as well as racially, she has been closely linked to Slovakia, in spite of Hungarian efforts to keep them apart. The teaching of Hus spread widely in Slovakia, and Protestantism was not stamped out, as in Bohemia; while the Czech national revival of the nineteenth century was largely the work of Slovaks—Kollár, Šafařík and Palacký—the last a Moravian Slovak, and all of them Protestants, conscious of the Hussite tradition.

. . . . . .

The Romans never succeeded in conquering the lands which now make up Czechoslovakia. In the second century of this era, Marcus Aurelius led his armies against the Marcomanni and the Quadi who then occupied these parts; but troubles in the East called him away, and he contented himself with leaving behind him a large army of occupation. Under his son Commodus this was withdrawn. Roman inscribed stones are found in Slovakia, and the foundations of Roman buildings have recently been excavated near the castle at Prague.

Čech the Ancestor

The ancestors of the various tribes which coalesced into the Czechs and the Slovaks, came originally from beyond the Carpathians, some following the course of the Labe (Elbe) into Bohemia, and others crossing the West Carpathians into Slovakia.

There is archæological evidence of the existence of Slavs in these regions as far back as 500 B.C., possibly as early as 900 B.C. But the accepted date for their final occupation of Čechy (*i.e.*

Bohemia) is the middle of the fifth century, when Čech, the ancestor, is said to have entered the country with his followers, and to have climbed the isolated hill, Říp, which rises conspicuously from the Bohemian plains. From this height he looked down on the fertile country, void of human life, but full of everything necessary to human existence, and, seeing it as a land of promise, he took possession. This was just about the same time that the Anglo-Saxons obtained control over England.

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The Legend of Libuša

Even the legends and traditions of a nation reveal the trend of its thoughts and the nature of its ideals. The Czech chronicler, Cosmas of Prague, writing in the twelfth century, records that the early Czechs were peaceable people, sharing all things in common, and desiring to make war on none but the wild beasts. Only with the ambition to own private wealth did the need for a judge arise, and one of their number, named Krok, was chosen as ruler. He had three daughters, each remarkable in her own way, but Libuša, the youngest, stands out as the national heroine, and the upholder of the traditions of the race.

The eldest daughter was skilled in medicines and poisons; the second taught the people pagan rites, under the name of religion; "the third," says the old chronicler, "was a wonderful woman among women; chaste in body, righteous in her morals, second to none as judge over the people, affable to all and even amiable, the pride and glory of the female sex, doing wise and manly deeds."

On account of her wisdom she was chosen by the people to succeed her father. When a dispute arose between two brothers concerning the inheritance of land, Libuša decreed that, according to the customs of the race, they must either divide it equally or share it in common. The elder brother

31. ROMANESQUE CHURCH ON THE RIP HILL

indignantly claimed his superior right to inherit, declaring that women were more fitted to receive the advances of wooers than to dictate law to soldiers.

In reply, Libuša referred to the story of the frogs' petition to Jupiter, and warned the people against the tyranny of kings, even as the prophet Samuel warned the children of Israel; but she did not resist what appears to have become a popular demand—that she should choose a husband who should rule them. She directed them to let her horse lead them to their future king, whom they would find ploughing with two oxen. They obeyed, and so Přemysl the Ploughman became the husband of Libuša, and the founder of the first Bohemian dynasty. He insisted on bringing with him his ploughman's boots, that his successors might remember their lowly origin, and be always humble and merciful; " and these boots," says Cosmas, " are preserved at Vyšehrad to this day in the Duke's chamber."

To Libuša is ascribed the founding of the city of Prague (or Praha, in Czech) on the opposite side of the Vltava from Vyšehrad. Standing on that high rock, she gazed out across the river towards what is now the Hradčany Hill, and uttered these prophetic words :

" I see a city the glory of which will reach the stars."

Then, it is said, she sent messengers across the river to find a man in the midst of the forest working at the threshold of a door. This was to mark the site of the new city. And as even mighty lords bow, before a low door, the name of the city was to be Praha, from " práh " which means " threshold."

Although these stories are more legendary than historical, they undoubtedly reveal the dawning of an ideal of government in which wisdom, justice and peace are seen as the goal to be desired, and humility and mercy as the chief requirements in a ruler. The ideal of righteousness thus dimly discerned was never wholly obscured, but guided the upward footsteps of the race through all the succeeding centuries.

The very name of Přemysl carries with it no warlike signification, but comes from a root meaning " to think over " or " reflect " ; and according to tradition he was a great lawgiver. His descendants reigned in Bohemia till 1306, and the great Charles IV (1346–1378) was the son of a Přemyslid mother.

Great Moravia

From the picturesque legends of early times we come to the more certain ground of history.

As early as the ninth century there came into being the prototype of the Czechoslovak State, which was known to the Greeks as " Megale Moravia."

Moravia and Slovakia (*i.e.* Nitra) were then united under one leader, Mojmír, who appears, however, to have been in some degree subject to the Frankish Empire. He was followed by Rastislav, under whom " Great Moravia " became practically independent. Later, Bohemia also became part of this great Empire.

The Slavonic Christian Missionaries

This Prince recognized the benefits of Christianity, which Western priests were preaching, and saw that his country could not long withstand Western influences. He therefore appealed to the Pope, Nicholas I, in 860, for apostles who knew the Slavonic language, to be sent to teach his people. The Pope declined, but Rastislav was not discouraged. In 862 he sent envoys to the Byzantine Emperor, Michael III, asking again for Christian teachers to instruct his people in their own language. In response, two brothers were sent, known as Constantine (or Cyril) and Methodius. They were apparently Greeks, not Slavs, but while mixing with the Bulgarian people at Salonika [1] they had learnt their language, and had translated parts of the Bible into it, for which purpose Constantine had

[1] The Thessalonica of St Paul.

devised a "Slavonic script," based on the Greek characters. They were thus able to bring to the Moravians a liturgy in their own tongue as well as several books of the Bible.

This marks the very beginning of the claim of this people to use and to be instructed in their native language—a claim which held such a prominent place in their struggles for liberty through a thousand years of history. We see also here the beginning of a revolt against the conducting of religious services in a language not generally understood by the congregations.

The Frankish priests in Moravia objected to the coming of Cyril and Methodius and to their use of the Slavonic tongue, denouncing them to the Pope as heretics, although from the time of their arrival in Moravia they always showed loyalty to the Church of Rome. In spite of Frankish hostility, a Bull, licensing the use of the Slavonic liturgy, was obtained from the Pope in 869, together with permission to conduct church services in the Old Slavonic language, as well as the universal Latin. It was a great concession, but it was withdrawn later.

Methodius was recognized by the Pope as Archbishop of Moravia and Pannonia. Constantine had already retired into a monastery at Rome, where he took the name of Cyril, by which he is usually known, and he died there shortly after.

In the meantime Christian churches had been built throughout Moravia, and services were conducted in the Slavonic tongue with marked results.

Christianity in Bohemia

Amongst the converts was a descendant of Přemysl, the first Christian Prince of Bohemia, Prince Bořivoj, who was baptized by Methodius in (about) 874. His wife, Ludmila, was received into the Christian Church at the same time, and became much renowned for her saintly life.

After the death of Methodius at Velehrad in 885, Svatopluk, the successor of Rastislav, drove away his disciples, most of whom took refuge in Bulgaria. Thus the Franks triumphed.

Pictures and statues of the two Slav apostles are often seen in Czechoslovakia. Methodius is said to have been originally an artist, and is looked upon as the patron-saint of artists, sometimes carrying a palette and brushes as his emblem, as well as wearing the mitre.

The Coming of the Magyars

The new Prince of Moravia, Svatopluk, who had ousted his uncle, Rastislav, and obtained the succession by a treacherous alliance with the Germans, was compelled to defend himself against the Germans during the greater part of his reign. The German Emperor, not able to subdue him alone, invited the Magyars or Hungarians, nomadic tribes of Mongolian stock who had recently appeared in Europe, to come to his aid. This had a far-reaching effect upon all Slavs, for the Magyars came and drove a great wedge into the Slavonic lands, separating the various tribes from each other. Palacký speaks of the advent of the Magyars as "the greatest misfortune that has befallen the Slavonic world for many centuries."

It was in 892 that the first Magyar attack was made. According to tradition Germans and Slavs were together defeated at Bratislava in 907, and the Magyars obtained possession of Moravia and Slovakia.

The Czechs under Prince Venceslas, warned perhaps by the fate of these regions, and more certainly by that of the Polabian Slavs in Germany, made peace with Henry the Fowler, King of Germany, and agreed to pay him tribute.

Good King Wenceslas

This Prince Venceslas, or more correctly, Václav, was the grandson of Bořivoj and Ludmila, and was carefully trained in the Christian religion by his grandmother. He is the "good King Wenceslas" of the familiar Christmas carol, the words of which, however, were only invented by Neale in recent times

to a thirteenth-century melody. He has been accused of being too submissive to the German King, but it must be remembered that he stood between two fires (or rather, "two fears") as Bohemia has nearly always done; and his brother and successor Boleslav, who had opposed this policy of vassalage, was obliged to return to it himself after spending all the early years of his reign in fighting his powerful western neighbour.

During his short reign of eight years Venceslas showed himself to be an enlightened ruler, far in advance of his times. He removed gibbets and gallows from public places, regarding their presence as more likely to brutalize the people than to deter them from crime. He also prohibited torture as a means of extracting confessions.

His chief aim seems to have been to live up to his Christian profession, according to his understanding of what this involved. Twice he is said to have offered personal combat to an invading prince in order to save his country from the horrors of war. He would often spend a great part of the night in prayer, and gave largely to the churches.

But in his family there was constant strife between the peaceful ideals of Christianity and the old paganism. Terrible results had already ensued. The gentle grandmother Ludmila had been murdered at prayer by the agents of her envious daughter-in-law, Drahomiř, still heathen at heart. And Venceslas himself finally fell a victim to the enmity of his brother Boleslav, the favourite son of Drahomiř, who lured the Prince to a Church festival at Stará Boleslav, and there attacked and killed him. This happened on September 28th, 929, and the anniversary is still observed in Czechoslovakia as the day of St Venceslas.

Boleslav succeeded his brother, and after fighting the Germans for fourteen years he was obliged, as we have seen, to make peace by agreeing to pay tribute. After that, he extended his own dominions, freeing Moravia from the Magyars, and conquering most of Slovakia.

His daughter, Dubravka or Dobrava, married the Polish

ruler, Mieczyslav I, who, through her influence, turned to Christianity. Before long the whole Polish nation adopted the same religion.

His son, Boleslav II, who succeeded him, obtained the consent of the Pope to a new bishopric at Prague, but only on condition that the liturgy used should be Latin and not Slavonic. According to the foundation-charter, Slovakia was included within its jurisdiction.

The first bishop was a Saxon who had long lived in Bohemia. The second, appointed in 982, was a Czech, the well-known Vojtěch, or Adalbert. He made unsuccessful efforts to put a stop to various still-lingering heathen practices, and this so stirred up the animosity of the Czech nobles against him that in discouragement he twice left Bohemia for Rome. He spread Christianity in Hungary and finally was martyred by the pagan Prussians (997). His name is connected with the beginning of the Church of Poland, of which his brother Radim was the first archbishop.

From 996 all the tribes occupying Bohemia were finally welded into one, and the whole country was ruled by the Přemyslids, whose dynasty continued until 1306.

The history of the two hundred and fifty years after Boleslav II does not greatly concern us. It is chiefly made up of struggles, fostered by Germany, between different members of the reigning family, during which German influence and the power of the Czech nobility increased.

Břetislav I (1037–1055) is important because he freed Moravia from the Poles and united it firmly to Bohemia. Ever since then Moravia and Bohemia have been under the same rule.

We first hear of the Castle of Bratislava when Břetislav was fighting against the Magyars. The Latin form of the name was Posonium, from which comes the Magyar, Pozsony. The Germans reduced " Břetislav'sburg " to Pressburg, which was till recently its best-known name.

Vratislav II (1061–1092) stood by the Roman Emperor during the " struggle for investitures " with the Pope, and as

a reward he was allowed to use the title of "King," and was crowned at Prague in 1086. The privilege did not extend to his successors.

Under Přemysl Otakar I (1197–1230) there were rival claimants to the German crown, and the Bohemian Prince took advantage of this to strengthen his own position. The title of hereditary King of Bohemia was conferred upon him and his heirs, and confirmed by the Pope and by successive German Emperors, along with other privileges.

Increasing Power of the Church

The growth of ecclesiastical authority marks this reign. The Bishop of Prague began to claim immunity from the temporal law-courts for all ecclesiastics, their servants and dependents ; and also to try and exact Church-tithes from the whole country.

Venceslas I, the son of Otakar, succeeded him (1230–1253).

His reign is chiefly remarkable for the defeat of the Asiatic Mongols in 1241, and for the great encouragement given to German settlers in Bohemia.

The invasion of Europe by the Mongols or Tartars from the north of Asia was wholly unexpected by the European princes, and in Russia and Poland the ravaging hordes met with little effective resistance. Venceslas hastily fortified the passes in the mountains north-east of Bohemia, and succeeded in holding them for three weeks against the enemy. Moravia, Hungary and Lower Austria were overrun, but Bohemia escaped, and the Tartars vanished almost as suddenly as they had come. Russia was not freed from them for two centuries.

German Colonists invited

The last rulers of the Přemyslid dynasty have been very much blamed for inviting German colonists to settle in Bohemia,

but their object was to stimulate trade and industry, just as Edward III invited the Flemings to England to found the weaving centres. The Germans built towns, having learned much from the French and Italians, whose immediate neighbours they were, and they were allowed to enclose their settlements with walls and to administer law independently of the Bohemian law-courts. The town walls were soon fortified, and the Bohemian nobles began to fortify their castles at about the same time. Mutual suspicion and distrust were already bringing ominous results. The present-day German "minority" in Bohemia, concentrated chiefly near the German frontiers, grew from these small beginnings, and it now constitutes over a fifth of the whole population.

But old conditions have changed; town-walls and fortifications have all vanished; and, if there do remain any barriers of distrust and suspicion, there is good ground for hope that they will soon fall before the common desire for liberty, order and true progress.

Přemysl Otakar II (1253–1278), the son and successor of Venceslas, continued his father's policy of attracting German colonists to Bohemia, partly in order to counterbalance the growing power of the nobles by the formation of a strong middle-class in the towns.

He extended the frontiers of his dominions to the Adriatic Sea, to include Austria, Styria and Carinthia, but he was not able to keep what he had gained. In 1278 through the treachery of the nobles he was disastrously defeated in a battle with Rudolph of Hapsburg, the German King, and fell fighting. It was then that the Hapsburgs acquired their Austrian lands.

The four ancient towers built into the surrounding walls on the Hradčany Hill at Prague date from this reign.

Otakar's son, Venceslas II (1278–1305), was only seven years old when his father died. He was first imprisoned in the Castle of Bezděz, in north-east Bohemia, by the usurper, Otho, Margrave of Brandenburg, and then forcibly kept out of

the country till he was twelve years old. After his return in 1283 there was a disturbed period, under the rule of regents and counsellors, but from the time the young King was able to take the reins of government into his own hands, the country seems to have become peaceful and prosperous. The silver mines of Kutná Hora were worked, and an improvement was made in the currency. This town, then peopled chiefly by Germans, became second only in importance to Prague.

Venceslas was crowned King of Poland in 1300, having been invited to settle the disputes between the different divisions of the country. The following year the Hungarian throne became vacant, Andrew III having died and left no heir, and a large party in the country, headed by Matthias Čák, the famous Count of Trenčín, wished to elect Venceslas to that throne also. But he declined, and advised the Hungarians to choose instead his twelve-year-old son, Venceslas, who was accordingly crowned King in the same year.

Matthias Čák received as a reward the whole province of Trenčín ; but his ambitions were not satisfied, as he showed later.

It was only for a short time that Bohemia, Moravia, Poland and Hungary, including Slovakia, were all under the rule of the Přemyslids. In 1305 Venceslas II died, at the age of thirty-four. His rights over Poland and Hungary had already been disputed by the Pope and by the German King, Albert ; and his son, who succeeded him in Bohemia as Venceslas III, yielded up his claim to Hungary to the Duke of Bavaria almost immediately. Then, on his way to Poland in 1306 to maintain his sovereignty there, he was assassinated at Olomouc, some say by agents of the Hapsburgs. He was only sixteen years old and was the last male representative of the dynasty of Přemysl, that had ruled nearly six hundred years.

The "King" of Slovakia

In the meantime Matthias Čák was taking advantage of the disturbed state of the country to extend his own dominions

in Slovakia. Now, for a short time, Slovakia had a ruler who maintained her independence of Hungary. He governed not only the whole valley of the Váh, and southward as far as Bratislava and Komárno, but also Moravia as far as the river Morava, and the Orava, Liptov and Zvolen provinces. He

Fig. 1.—Trenčín Gateway Tower.

was known as "Lord of the Váh and of Tatra." Trenčín was his capital and residence. He struck his own coinage at Nitra and held his court at Trenčín, behaving in every way like a king, with his palaces, his Chancellor, his Lord Chamberlain and Lord Chief Justice.

The Pope excommunicated him, but he cared nothing, and appointed his own clergy to officiate. At last Karl Robert

of Naples, now King of Hungary, sent an army against him, and defeated him near Košice; but his power was only weakened, not broken. He continued to make incursions not only into Hungary, but also into Austria and Moravia.

King John of Bohemia took the field against him and defeated him at Holič, after which he sued for peace. He still ruled in his own castle of Trenčín, fortifying it strongly and building the high square tower that we see to-day. (Plate XXXVI.)

After his death in 1318, Karl Robert took possession of the Castle, and laid waste the town, and the little kingdom of Slovakia fell to pieces.

The memory of the "King" was long treasured in the mountains, where the peasants still spoke of Slovakia as "Matthias's land," and it is so called in old Magyar documents. For five centuries his metal breast-plate was to be seen in Trenčín; now it is in the Museum at Budapest.

CHAPTER II

AFTER the murder of Venceslas III, Rudolph of Hapsburg, the son of Albert, was elected King by the Bohemian nobles, but he only lived a few months after his election. Then the choice fell on Henry of Carinthia (1307) who had married Anne, the eldest daughter of Venceslas II. Civil war broke out between the Bohemian nobles and the German townsmen, the latter claiming a share in the government of the country and trying to obtain it by forcibly seizing the nobles.

King John of Bohemia

The King was too weak to maintain order, so it was agreed to depose him. An embassy was sent in 1310 to the new Holy Roman Emperor, Henry of Luxemburg, to beg that his son John should be placed on the Bohemian throne, and that he should marry Elizabeth, the second daughter of Venceslas II. This was successfully arranged; Henry offered little resistance, and in 1311 John and Elizabeth were crowned at Prague as King and Queen of Bohemia.

The new King was only fourteen years old when he was chosen to reign, and he lost the guiding hand of his father in the same year that he was crowned. His rule was not an unqualified success. Instead of attending to the affairs of the kingdom, he was always ready to be the knight-errant of Europe, taking sides in every quarrel that arose, until it became a proverb: "Nothing can be done without the help of God and the King of Bohemia."

The way in which he thus drained the country of money, his frequent absences, his impetuous temper, and his failure

thoroughly to master the Czech language all combined to prevent him from being very popular during his lifetime, but his heroic death is what is now chiefly remembered.

It must, however, be recognized that he greatly extended the sway of Bohemia. Silesia and the Cheb district were permanently incorporated with Bohemia during his reign, and he also reunited Upper Lusatia to the Bohemian crown.

During his absences, he left the government of Bohemia and Moravia to his son Charles, who fulfilled his trust with great ability.

King John lost the sight of one eye during a crusade against the heathen Lithuanians, and soon became totally blind. But this did not diminish his ardour. It is well known how, in 1346 he hurried to the aid of the King of France against the English King, Edward III, and fell fighting on the field of Crécy together with the flower of the Bohemian nobility; and how Edward and his son, the Black Prince, paid tribute to his chivalry and courage.

The Golden Age of Bohemian History

The reign of Charles IV (1346–1378) marks the golden age of Bohemian history. He was the wisest ruler of his time, and distinguished himself by his great interest in education, religion, law, morality, and in the peaceful prosperity of his dominions generally.

He was born in Prague, the city of his Přemyslid mother, in 1314, but was sent to be educated in Paris at the age of seven years. The love of French culture remained with him throughout his life, but he always showed the greatest affection for the land of his birth, for its people and its language. Palacký says that his talent in the art of government was exceptional, and that he obtained far more by skilful diplomacy than he ever could have done by force of arms. Even before coming to the throne he induced the Pope to found the Archbishopric of Prague, which made Bohemian bishops independent

of the German archbishops of Mainz. To obtain this he had to declare on oath that the language of Bohemia was Slavonic, quite different from German, and that the distance from Prague to Mainz was a twelve days' journey. Already he was thus showing his care for the independence of Bohemia ; and indeed he had begun to govern the country as his father's representative when he was only nineteen, so he had an early initiation.

He was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1346, and less than two months' later his father's death on the field of Crécy gave him also the throne of Bohemia.

Prague University

One of his most important acts was to found the University of Prague in 1348, the first of the Universities of Central Europe. Formed on the model of Paris, it was divided into four " nations " :

1. Bohemian, including Hungarians (*i.e.* Slovaks and Southern Slavs).
2. Bavarian, including Rhine-land Germans and Austrians.
3. Saxon, including Danes and English.
4. Polish, including Silesians, Russians and Lithuanians.

The words in which Charles announced to the Bohemian Estates his intention of founding the University are very remarkable :

" One of our greatest endeavours is that Bohemia our kingdom, for which we feel greater affection than for any of our other lands, should, through our action, be adorned by a greater number of learned men ; thus will the faithful inhabitants of that kingdom, who incessantly thirst for the fruits of learning, be no longer obliged to beg for foreign alms, rather will they find a table prepared for them in their own kingdom ; thus will the natural sagacity of their minds move them to become cultured by the possession of knowledge."

During his lifetime the number of students already amounted to between five and seven thousand.

Another of his measures was to re-establish a regular administration of the law, appointing thirteen courts of justice in the country districts and a High Court of Law at Prague. In all these courts the Bohemian language alone was to be used. Charles himself spoke this language fluently. He recognized the relation between the people of Bohemia and the other Slav races by founding a Benedictine monastery in Prague where Croat monks copied the Old Slavonic MSS, and used the Slavonic ritual, with the Pope's consent. It was known as " Na Slovanech " ; to-day it is usually called Emaus.

His " Golden Bull " of 1356 remained valid up to 1804. It regulated the election of the Holy Roman Emperors, and decreed amongst other things that the sons of Electors and other German princes should learn the Bohemian language.

He showed his democratic spirit by obtaining the consent of the Estates to a law which guaranteed to the peasants the right of appealing to the Royal law-courts against their territorial lords.

The restoration of order and public safety, the encouragement of agriculture and commerce, the reformation of the morals and conduct of the clergy, were yet other directions to which this versatile king turned his energies.

Like all the greatest men of this country, he had a deep sense of religion, and after building the famous castle of Karlův Týn or Karlstein he used to go and meditate in the chapel there, considering the vast problems of his government before making decisions. This stronghold was intended to be a safe depository for the Crown jewels and treasures and for the State archives. It stands in an impregnable position, on a steep rock, about twenty miles from Prague.

Charles also formed a guild of artists, corresponding to the modern Academy of Arts. He built the " New Town " of Prague, between the Vyšehrad Hill and the river Vltava, rebuilt and enlarged the Cathedral of St Vitus, and was

responsible for the erection of many churches. The famous " Charles Bridge " across the Vltava at Prague was begun by him in 1357.

It was not till 1361 that the King was able to rejoice in a son and heir. In his desire to obtain as tutor for his son the most learned man of the age, he offered the post to Petrarch the poet, but the offer was declined. While the King wanted the poet to come to Prague, the poet was anxious for the King to make his capital at Rome.

Famous Preachers

The prosperity which Bohemia now enjoyed and Charles's lavish gifts to the Church seem to have encouraged luxury and immorality amongst the clergy. As early in his reign as 1358 Charles saw the need for reform in both clergy and people, and he invited a celebrated Austrian preacher, Conrad Waldhauser, to come and preach in the churches of Prague. His sermons, denouncing immorality and self-indulgence, produced a great effect, and roused the jealousy and animosity of other preachers. However, he remained rector of the Týn Church at Prague up to his death in 1369.

He was succeeded by Milič of Kroměříž, who was able to preach in the Bohemian language, and therefore had an even wider influence. Like so many reformers, he was led into the error of prophesying that the end of the world was near, and this gave his enemies an opportunity to accuse him to the Pope. He went to Rome for an interview, and was acquitted, returning to Prague to continue his preaching, to the great joy of his followers.

One of the results of his work was the establishment of a home for fallen women in Prague. Three hundred could be taken in at " Jerusalem " as it was called. Many citizens also repented of their evil lives, and became reformed characters. In the work of these two preachers we have the first signs of the great religious revival which was to culminate under John Hus.

32. KARLŠTEJN

Amongst those who listened to the fiery words of Milič was a young student at Prague University, Tomáš of Štítné, who returned to his home in Southern Bohemia much influenced by what he had heard. He wrote a number of works of a religious nature in the Czech language, and was severely criticized by theologians of Prague University for using the language of the common people in books on " higher subjects " ; but he maintained that he had as much right to express himself in Czech for the Czechs as St. Paul had to use Hebrew for the Hebrews and Greek for the Greeks. All people, he said, were the sons of God, and all had an equal right to acquire wisdom in that language which God had given them.

For a country squire to make such a revolutionary stand against the scholastic methods of his day indicates that already the claim to independence of judgment was asserting itself in the thoughts of the Czech people, a claim which sooner or later was bound to bring them into conflict with the Church of Rome.

Another writer who was strongly influenced by the preaching of Milič was Matěj of Janov. He insisted in his writings that knowledge of the Bible was the main source of true Christian theology and of a code of Christian morals, and he attacked the dead formalism and soulless ceremonies of the Church, thus bringing himself under the censure of the ecclesiastical authorities.

Venceslas IV

Venceslas IV, the son of Charles, was only seventeen when he succeeded to the throne, and he appears to have ruled well at first, with the able counsel of his father's ministers. In 1381 he arranged a marriage between his sister Anne, then fifteen years of age, and Richard II of England. This marriage had far-reaching effects, for it is almost certain that Wyclif's writings were brought back to Bohemia by the courtiers or students who escorted the Princess to England. It is said she took with her a copy of the Bible, not only in Latin, but

also in Bohemian. We know on Wyclif's authority that she read it assiduously. The Bible had been translated into the Czech language at the end of Charles IV's reign; that is to say, before Wyclif's translation into English was made.

Good Queen Anne

This daughter of such a famous father, the first Bohemian woman to live in England, appears to have made herself much beloved there. She only lived twelve years after her marriage and at her death the King in his sorrow had the Royal palace at Sheen, where he had lived with her, razed to the ground.

Chaucer celebrated the wedding in his *Parliament of Birds* where the King and the Bohemian Princess are symbolized as two royal eagles; and later, in his *Legend of Good Women*, he refers to his "lady sovereign":

> "Who is so good, so sweet, so debonair,
> I pray to God her lot be ever fair!"

This was not the first of the many links between Bohemia and this island of ours. Bohemian scholars had already studied at Oxford University, and an Englishman had been Bishop of Olomouc as early as 1201.

King Venceslas was fond of wine and hunting, and disliked the high nobility and prelates, preferring to make friends amongst other classes. There is an inn in Prague, at Malá Strana, under the Castle, with the inscription, "Here King Venceslas IV used to come as a guest"; he seems to have played the part that Haroun al-Raschid played in the streets of Baghdad. He came into serious conflict with the nobles and the haughty Archbishop of Prague, and eventually, in 1400, he was deposed from the throne of the Holy Roman Empire.

In the following year, for the first time for more than a hundred years, a foreign enemy was at the gates of Prague, when an ally of the new Emperor set siege to it, unsuccessfully.

But the struggles between Venceslas and the " League of the Lords " need not greatly concern us. The real history of the nation centres round another figure, that of John Hus.

John Hus

If a Czech is asked nowadays who are the two most revered national heroes, he will not give the name of any mighty ruler or winner of battles; he will unhesitatingly name for the first, John Hus, a University professor and a preacher, and for the second, Jan Amos Komenský, an educationalist, and the exiled bishop of the Bohemian Brethren. The first was a Czech from South Bohemia; the second was a Moravian Slovak.

It is such men as these, men who appeared to be failures from the world's standpoint, who are most revered, and most gratefully remembered because of the work that they did in liberating the thought of the nation. Can any people whose greatest heroes never held a sword nor led a campaign be esteemed " warlike " ? Does not this rather rank them with those who believe in the triumph of spiritual forces as the only hope of mankind ?

John Hus was born in the little village of Husinec, in South Bohemia, not far from Prachatice. The year of his birth is doubtful, but it was certainly between 1369 and 1375. Though his parents were poor, they had a sense of responsibility towards their children, and Hus received the best education that was available, coming at an early age to Prague, to study at the University. He himself indicates in his writings with quaint humour, his struggle with poverty during his student life : " As I, when I was a hungry little student made a spoon out of bread till I had eaten the peas, and then I ate the spoon also; " and he tells how he tried to add to his scanty means by acting as chorister and ministrant at religious services. Later he entered the college recently founded by King Venceslas IV in the fruit market. In 1393

he took his degree as Bachelor of Arts, becoming Bachelor of Divinity in 1394, Master of Arts in 1396, and ordained priest about 1400. As early as 1402 he was first made Rector of the University. The fame of his preaching was already great, and in the same year he was appointed preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. This had been founded to enable the citizens to hear sermons in their native tongue. Many good women were amongst the crowds who assembled regularly to listen to his preaching; Queen Sophia herself was a constant attendant. His power of attraction lay undoubtedly not so much in his eloquence as in his spiritual perception and sincerity, for he fearlessly declared that the only proof of a true Christianity lay in pure and well-ordered lives. "By their fruits ye shall know them" was virtually his standing text.

At that period, any sermon which declared that purity of life was the only proof of Christianity could be construed as an attack on the papacy, and on the lives of the clergy as a whole. The "Great Schism," involving the existence of two rival popes, had begun in 1378, and lasted till 1417, thus coinciding almost exactly with the lifetime of Hus. Such a condition, with each pope cursing and excommunicating his rival, could not fail to turn men's thoughts away from traditional and organized authority to the necessity for forming independent judgments based on fixed principles. It is significant that Wyclif started his translation of the Bible in 1381, three years after the "Great Schism" began. We have seen that about the same time Anne of Bohemia, daughter of Charles IV, landed in England to become the wife of the English King, Richard II; and in her train there followed Bohemian students to study at the English Universities. Thus the teachings of Wyclif came to be better known at the University of Prague than in many places nearer England. Hus certainly was acquainted with them, and found much that was in sympathy with his own line of thought; but on the other hand he was never in the least desirous of severing him-

self from the Church of Rome. He wished to reform the abuses from within, and with this object he continued to preach boldly against dishonest and immoral practices of the clergy. It is not surprising that much enmity was aroused against him.

In 1409, through his influence and that of Jerome of Prague, King Venceslas was prevailed upon to issue a decree which for the first time gave a voting majority to the Bohemian nation in the University of Prague. This was a memorable year in the history of the University. Hitherto the majority had always rested with the Germans; and when the Decree of Kutná Hora, as it was called, was recognized as final, the German professors and students, to the number of five thousand, indignantly took their departure from Prague. This was by no means an unmitigated evil, for the University was thus made free to establish schools all over Bohemia, and a wide-spread educational system was begun.

An active campaign against the teachings of Wyclif had already been started in Prague, and Hus, having been accused of sharing in his heresies, was summoned to appear before Pope John XXIII and, not complying, was excommunicated.

Then there arose new ground of conflict between Hus and the Pope, in the public sale of indulgences in Prague. The Pope wanted to raise money for a " crusade " against the King of Naples, who supported his rival, Gregory; and Hus, who considered this sale of indulgences immoral, openly preached against it. Three students who joined in his protests were put to death, and conditions were becoming so disorderly in Prague that at the request of the King, who had shown him much friendship, Hus finally consented in 1412 to withdraw into the country. He retired to the castle of Kozí Hrádek (Goat's Castle) near to which the town of Tábor afterwards arose. Here he continued preaching, often in the open air, and great crowds of peasants flocked to hear him. He also wrote several of his works at this time, including *De Ecclesia.* Within recent years the remains of this little castle have been

excavated, and pilgrimages are made to it, especially on July 6th, the anniversary of the death of Hus.

In 1414 on the suggestion of Sigismund, King of Hungary, and brother of Venceslas, Hus was summoned to appear before a General Council of the Church at Constance. He received a safe-conduct from King Sigismund, according to which he was "to come unmolested to Constance, there have free audience, and return unharmed, should he not submit to the authority of the Council."

Nevertheless he was imprisoned almost as soon as he arrived and, after refusing to retract his opinions, was burned on July 6th, 1415.

. . . . . .

In John Hus we have an outstanding example of a man who was able to take a wider, higher view than the great mass of his contemporaries. To the Council of Constance he expressed himself humbly as quite willing to acknowledge that he had been mistaken in his views, if any proof could be given him from the Scriptures, the source of all Christian teaching; but no attempt was made to meet him on this ground. He was told that it was his duty to recant because his superiors required it of him, whether he was convinced or not. His innate honesty made this an impossibility, and the result was yet another futile attempt to stamp out an idea by killing the man who held it.

He maintained in his writings that the Pope was only truly Christ's representative and the successor of St Peter, and the cardinals were only truly the successors of the Apostles, in so far as they followed the examples of faith, modesty and love which St. Peter and the Apostles gave; and therefore, he reasoned, many saintly men were truer successors of the Apostles than the Pope of that time.

So with the lesser clergy also. "Not every priest is a saint, but every saint is a priest."

When he was attacked by those who felt themselves reproached by his teaching, he appealed confidently to "Omni-

potent God, the first and last refuge of the oppressed, the Lord who will preserve the truth in all eternity." His strength lay in the loving, unselfish spirit he showed and in his supreme confidence in the ultimate victory of truth, a confidence which was expressed in the motto afterwards adopted by the Hussites, "Pravda vítězí"—"Truth wins." This is now the motto of the Czechoslovak Republic.

When Hus had already left for Constance the doctrine of "communion in both kinds for the laity," which later became the central doctrine of the reformers, had been first preached publicly in Prague by Jacobellus of Stříbro, a prominent magister of the University. Soon after this the sacrament was dispensed to the laity in accordance with this teaching. Hus was consulted about it, and gave his approval, but he had never made it a matter of first importance in his own preaching.

It was only after his martyrdom that the chalice became the central emblem of the whole Hussite movement, and its adherents began to be called Calixtines (from Latin *calix*, a cup) or Utraquists (from Latin, *utraque species*, both kinds), as well as Hussites.

CHAPTER III

THERE was great indignation in Bohemia when the news of the death of Hus arrived, and in this King Venceslas and Queen Sophia shared. A protest was forwarded to the Council of Constance, signed by four hundred and fifty-two nobles and knights, who soon afterwards formed themselves into a league pledged to obey the word of God and to defend the liberty to preach it. Bohemia virtually renounced its allegiance to the Church of Rome, thus becoming the first Protestant nation.

In 1418 the Council of Constance came to an end with the election of Martin V as Pope, and so the "Great Schism" ended. King Venceslas was induced, through the new Pope's threats of a "crusade" against Bohemia, to attempt by decrees to check the anti-papal movement, but his efforts were vain.

Disturbances arose in Prague as soon as his decrees were issued; Utraquists and Romanists came into conflict, and during the riot the Romanist burgomaster and town-councillors were thrown from the windows of the Town Hall and killed.

The Hussite Wars

This "defenestration," as it is called, marks the beginning of the Hussite wars. It is said that Žižka, who afterwards became the great general of the Hussites, led the crowd who stormed the Town Hall.

King Venceslas died soon after hearing the news of the defenestration, which had infuriated him. His brother, Sigismund, as heir to the throne, took over the control. Already the Hussites were splitting into two camps, the more moderate or aristocratic party, and the more advanced or

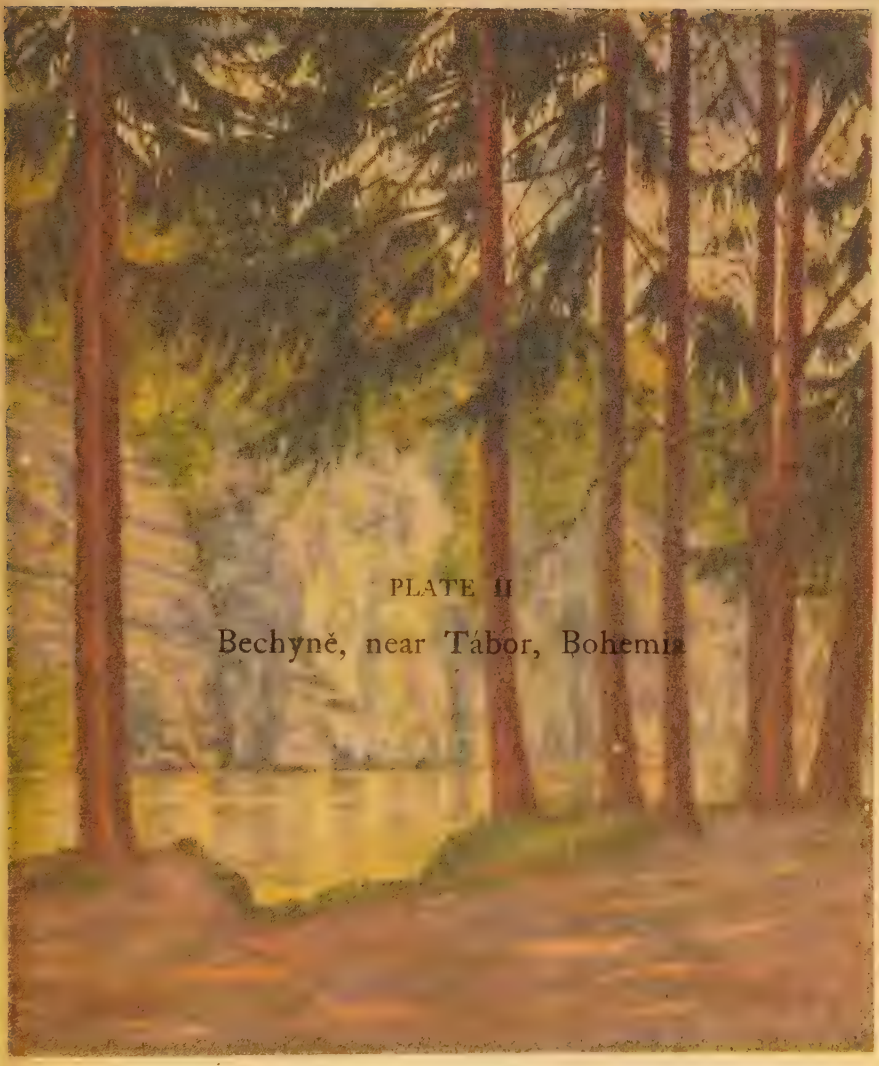

PLATE II

Bechyně, near Tábor, Bohemia

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This "defenestration," as it is called, marks the beginning of the Hussite wars. It is said that Žižka, who afterwards became the great general of the Hussites, led the crowd who stormed the Town Hall.

King Venceslas died soon after hearing the news of the defenestration, which had infuriated him. His brother, Sigismund, as heir to the throne, took over the control. Already the Hussites were splitting into two camps, the more moderate or aristocratic party, and the more advanced or

democratic party. These are also called the " Praguers " and the " Táborites." The former centred round the University of Prague, and the latter built and fortified a town on a hill in Southern Bohemia which they named Tábor, after Mount Tabor in the Bible. This advanced section maintained that the Bible was the sole authority in all matters of religious belief. They were the precursors of the Puritans who fought under Cromwell, and they showed a similar self-devotion and sincerity. Undoubtedly there were many amongst them who made a real contribution to the spiritual progress of the nation.

After the decrees of Venceslas, restoring to the papal clergy many churches which had been taken over by the Utraquists, great crowds of the former Utraquist congregations had flocked together in the country districts, especially in the neighbourhood of Ústí, near the castle of Kozí Hrádek, which had been the refuge of Hus. On one memorable day, July 22nd, 1419, more than 42,000 had been present, maintaining perfect order and spending the whole day in prayer. These meetings had been the beginning of the Táborite party. Its adherents were chiefly peasants, small landowners, and tradesmen, led by priests, and from material such as this John Žižka formed what was to be an " invincible army." His methods included the use of waggon-forts, *i.e.* waggons covered with steel, which were used not only for defence, but also for offensive action. A model of one of these waggons can be seen in the Museum at Tábor, where it is pointed out as a precursor of the tank.

No less than five crusades were launched by the Pope against the Hussites during the next eleven years, and during that time Tábor was the real centre of the movement. It formed a kind of military republic, with community of goods and under strict austere laws. No quarrelling or theft was permitted, and " prohibition " was rigidly enforced. Enthusiasm for religious liberty bound all the members together and created a feeling of brotherhood and equality ; and this

religious spirit was the secret of their successful resistance to their enemies.

Hussite Women

One remarkable feature about the Hussite movement was the part played by women. They took their full share with the men in the struggle for religious liberty, even helping sometimes to dig the trenches, when an attack was expected. The whole community at Tábor was made up of "brothers and sisters," with equal rights and equal obligations to service.

Æneas Sylvius, the author of *Historia Bohemica*, who afterwards became Pope Pius II, wrote: "The Italian priests should be ashamed, they of whom it is doubtful whether they have even once read the New Testament; among the Táborites you would hardly find a poor woman who could not answer any question referring to the Old or to the New Testament."

Later, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we find the Czech Brethren, the descendants of the Hussites, giving women equal benefits of education with men; and this they did, until their work in Bohemia was suppressed by the Hapsburgs.

With such a record it is not surprising that centuries afterwards the Czechs were the first race to elect a woman-deputy to their House of Representatives, the Bohemian Diet.

The historian Palacký points out that the Hussite war was the first war in the world's history fought to uphold ideas, instead of material interests. No attempt was made to gain dominion over the surrounding lands. It was looked upon as a fight for the liberty of the word of God.

"On its path to ecclesiastical omnipotence, the hierarchic system of the Middle Ages first encountered resistance on the part of the Hussites, who cried, 'Stop.' They forced the hierarchy to recognize the existence of something higher, without it and above it, and also to learn to respect the right of men to form their own opinions and to give utterance to them."

On March 1st, 1420, Pope Martin V proclaimed the first

crusade against Bohemia, calling Christendom to arms against the nation, and promising the usual indulgences. The effect of this was to rouse the entire population, with the exception of the German settlers, to sink their differences and to unite to resist Sigismund and the crusaders. But the spirit of revenge again awoke; priests were killed, churches and convents destroyed, and other outrages committed against the Roman Catholics, with the result that the more moderate Hussites were once more alienated.

In the meantime, the whole Western civilization was being mobilized against this small country. "Crusaders" from over thirty nations, soldiers of fortune and adventurers, of every type, actuated by various motives, swarmed to the standard of the Pope.

Amongst the leaders were Frederick of Hohenzollern and Albert of Hapsburg, Sigismund's son-in-law. The vast army of crusaders which was encamped round Prague in June 1420 numbered from 100,000 to 150,000. Žižka had, before their arrival, occupied the hill since known as Žižkov, or Žižka's Hill. In the struggle for this hill the crusaders were completely defeated; and dissensions having also broken out among them, it seemed as if this one battle might pave the way for peace.

The Hussites drew up the "Articles of Prague" in which all those who adhered to the communion in both kinds concurred. These Articles provided for:

1. The free preaching of the word of God.
2. The granting of the Cup to the laity.
3. The restriction of the wealth of the clergy.
4. The suppression of mortal sins, and of disorders.

Utraquists and Roman Catholics met to discuss these provisions, but the conference broke down on one point: namely, as to whether, in cases of doubt, the deciding authority should be the Church or the Scriptures.

John Žižka

The struggle continued with varying violence. Žižka routed the crusaders again and again, never losing a battle. In spite of deeds of harshness recorded against him, he was a fair fighter, and tried to restrain the fanaticism which characterized some of his followers. His disinterestedness and courage and the sincerity of his religious fervour are not open to question; neither is his military genius. When totally blind, he used his generals as his "eyes" and so trained them to succeed him. Unhappily for the Hussites, their "moderate" and "advanced" parties could not agree as to aims and methods, and at intervals they came into open conflict with each other. In these conflicts Žižka was invariably victorious. He died of the plague on October 11th, 1424, during the siege of Přibyslav, on the Moravian frontier.

After his death his followers divided into two sections, the Táborites, who remained at Tábor, and the "Orphans," who made Hradec Králové their headquarters. Efforts were made to place the Polish prince, Sigismund Korybut, on the throne of Bohemia, but these failed. Žižka had favoured his candidature a few years before. The "Two Prokops" as they were called, Prokop the Great and Prokop the Less, had now the command of the Táborites and Orphans respectively, and under their leadership a new crusade under Henry of Winchester received a disastrous defeat in the Plzeň district in 1427.

Battle of Domažlice

Yet one more endeavour, in 1431, headed by Cardinal Cesarini, the papal legate for Germany, ended in the most complete victory which the Hussites ever gained, on August 14th, 1431. This was near Domažlice. The army of the crusaders, according to the lowest estimates, numbered 90,000 infantry and 40,000 horsemen. When the Bohemians were still four miles off, the rattle of their war-waggons could be

PLATE III

Arcaded Square, Domažlice, Bohemia

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Jessie Mathewson

heard by their enemies, and the voice of the whole army joining in their famous song :

" All ye warriors of God,
Fighters for His law,
Pray to God for help,
And trust in Him,
With Him victory ever will be yours.

Fear not those, the Lord hath said,
Who would your body harm.
For love of your fellow-creatures
He has ordered you to die,
Therefore strengthen manfully your hearts."

The battle never was actually a battle. It was a great flight, a rout. The crusaders did not wait to meet the foe, but fled towards the passes in the Šumava mountains. Cardinal Cesarini himself had to escape disguised as a common soldier. The Bohemians pursued the enemy far into the mountains, inflicting great losses, while to themselves it was almost a bloodless victory

Cardinal Cesarini, who before had favoured suppression of the Hussites by force, now became a strong advocate at the Council of Basle for a peaceful settlement with them. Three years later negotiations were still being carried on, but no agreement had been reached. The advanced sections of the Hussites, including John of Rokycan, demanded a general reform of the Church and a return to the order of primitive Christianity. The Utraquist nobles, on the other hand, thought this was asking too much, and favoured the acceptance of four " Compacts " founded on the " Articles of Prague."

The divergence between the two sections was so great that it ended in war on May 30th, 1434. The " army of the nobles " met the " army of the towns," including the Táborites and Orphans under the two Prokops, near the village of Lipany, and in the battle that followed the " army of the towns " was practically wiped out, both the Prokops and most of the other leaders being killed, with over thirteen thousand of the rank

and file. "Thus these Bohemians could only be conquered by other Bohemians; they who had proved themselves invincible to all Germans, and had spread the terror and glory of their name throughout the whole world." So writes Bienenberg, in his *History of Hradec Králové.*

This great battle of Lipany cannot be looked upon merely as a struggle between aristocracy and democracy. It was, in a measure, a conflict between order and disorder. Some of the Táborite soldiers had been getting out of hand, and had attacked their leader, Prokop the Great, when he tried to maintain order in the camp. After that, it cannot surprise us that they were defeated, for the old qualities which had led them to victory were evidently on the wane.

Of the remnant of Táborites, the more peaceful and pious retired to secluded places, giving themselves up to prayer and meditation, and partly from these there grew the sect of the "Czech Brethren," with its later development, the Moravian Church.

The more warlike of the Táborites left the country, some becoming mercenaries in the service of foreign countries. Others made their home in Slovakia, serving under Jan Jiskra of Brandýs, a Czech, who for many years ruled that country and united it against Hungary. Fortified Hussite churches are still to be seen in various parts of Slovakia, and the Czech Bible is used there even to the present day.

Peter Chelčický

Here we must turn aside for awhile from the current of public events, to consider the life of a man who took no outward part in them, but whose influence was deep and far-reaching in the history of his nation and the world.

Peter Chelčický was born about twenty years later than Hus, and, like Hus, he came from a village of South Bohemia. He is one of the most remarkable men of his generation, for

he (again like Hus), held views far in advance of those commonly accepted.

He went to Prague in his youth, and may have come into contact with Hus there; it is certain that he was much influenced by his teaching.

In 1419 some of the Táborites appealed to the Doctors and Masters of Prague University as to whether it was allowed to defend the truth of Christ with the sword. The very fact of their asking such a question marks a step in advance. The answer was, in effect, that it was lawful to fight in defence of religious liberty, but not for the sake of imposing a creed upon others.

But Peter Chelčický was not satisfied, and declared that all bloodshed was a sin against God. He left Prague in 1420 when it was being defended by Žižka's army, and retired to his village of Chelčice to live the life of a farmer. There he wrote various works in Czech, in which he showed how far Christendom had strayed from the teaching of Christ. In one of them, *The Net of the True Faith*, he likened the Pope and the Emperor to "two big whales" who have broken the "net" of the Christian faith; and he attributed the low level of Christianity to these two institutions, the Church and the State, obedience to whose laws, he maintained, runs counter to obedience to Christ's teaching. He drew the conclusions that Christian love can only be shown in non-resistance to evil; that a true Christian cannot hold a State office, nor be a soldier, nor a priest of the established Church, but must earn his daily bread by working with his hands. He acknowledged no barriers of race, or class, believing that all men should be brothers, with equal rights and equal duties.

Thus he anticipated the teaching of Tolstoy, who was astonished to find that his own expressed views had been put into writing by a Czech peasant four hundred and fifty years earlier.

The following which gathered round Chelčický grew into the famous Unity of Czech Brethren, from which arose, during

the exile, what is known as the Moravian Church. Palacký thus sums up their chief characteristics :

1. They attached more importance to the practice of Christianity than to the doctrine.
2. Piety, according to their view, must always accord with common sense, and common sense with piety.
3. Church reform occupied a prominent place in their teaching.

The Brethren did not continue to follow Chelčický's teaching on all points ; they relaxed somewhat his strict rules as to simplicity of living, equality, and refusal to recognize the State ; but they continued to make it their endeavour to keep to the spirit of New Testament teaching, and they exerted a great influence for good over the Czech nation. In spite of persecution they grew rapidly, becoming the chief centre of culture, and by the end of the sixteenth century they had organized the best elementary and secondary schools, and had produced the best examples of Czech literature. One of their Bishops, Blahoslav, translated the New Testament into Czech, and several members of the Unity completed, in 1593, the standard version of the Bible. It is known as the Bible of Kralice, because it was printed at Kralice in Moravia. Czechs, Moravians and one Slovak had a share in its production.

In Chelčický we see the forerunner of George Fox, who more than two hundred years later founded the English Quakers, with the same doctrines of non-resistance, and the same protests against a formal religion. But another two hundred years on the road to toleration did not save him and his followers from bitter persecution at the hands of the Puritans. So does history repeat itself.

It was yet another two years after the battle of Lipany before the decree of excommunication was removed from the Bohemians. The leaders had by that time consented to certain modifications of the Compacts on which the Council of Basle had insisted. The Estates had elected John of

Rokycan Archbishop of Prague, but neither the Pope nor the Council of Basle had yet recognized him.

However, as soon as the excommunication was removed, Sigismund issued a decree confirming all the ancient rights of Bohemia, and then at last he was accepted as King, after an interregnum of seventeen years, and made his entry into Prague on August 23rd, 1436. He was now sixty-eight years of age, and had learned caution by his bitter experiences, so his short reign of sixteen months was comparatively tranquil.

The sanction of the " Compacts " by the Council of Basle reached Prague in February, 1437, and Sigismund then issued a decree, declaring that the Bohemians and Moravians who received the communion in both kinds were " true Christians." The two stone tablets set up to commemorate the reading of this decree are preserved in the Bohemian Museum at Prague.

On the death of Sigismund, Albert of Hapsburg became the heir, in accordance with the treaty concluded under Charles IV, by which the houses of Luxemburg and Hapsburg had agreed to recognize each other as heirs, should one or other line become extinct. Albert was also Sigismund's son-in-law, and, in spite of his German sympathies, his claims were recognized by the Estates without much opposition. He died unexpectedly two years later, leaving the throne without an heir, but a posthumous son was born who was christened Ladislas, and who, as great-grandson of the famous Charles IV, was looked on favourably by the Bohemians. A Czech nobleman, George of Poděbrad, now became the leader of the Utraquist party, and by the time the young King was eight years old he was practically established as regent, an office which was formally conferred on him in 1451. He had to fight the powerful Romanist lords before he could restore order in the country. In 1452 he captured the town of Tábor, which had hitherto successfully resisted all attempts to take it. Strange that it should fall at last to a Utraquist leader!

George of Poděbrad

Ladislas died of Asiatic plague when he was only seventeen, and George of Poděbrad was unanimously chosen by the Estates to succeed him.

Now again after many years the Czechs were governed by a Czech king, and great joy was shown when he was elected. The Utraquist Archbishop of Prague, John of Rokycan, not being recognized by the Pope, two Hungarian bishops consented to officiate at the coronation, and the new King was required to pledge himself beforehand to obey the Church, to maintain its unity, and to extirpate all sects and heresies in Bohemia.

Under him order and justice were re-established, and the Bohemian state was reorganized. Although a convinced Utraquist, he was very anxious to be on good terms with the Pope. He saw that the Czechs were regarded as the outcasts of European society, as worse even than the Turks, and he wished to restore to the country the prestige it had enjoyed under Charles IV. But the Pope demanded of him a complete renunciation of the Compacts, and to this George would not consent. He declared that he would rather be deprived of his throne and his life than be false to his Utraquist principles.

The fall of Constantinople occurring at this time, Pope Pius II was unwilling to engage in a controversy with Bohemia, because of the Turkish danger. It was only therefore when a new Pope succeeded that King George was actually excommunicated. In the meantime he had attempted to suppress the Czech Brethren, no doubt with the idea of conciliating the Pope, and proving his desire to keep the pledge made before his coronation. In these persecutions he was encouraged by John of Rokycan, although the Utraquist Archbishop had earlier recommended his hearers to read Chelčický's books and tracts.

A League of Nations

It was about the year 1464 that George of Poděbrad definitely brought forward a scheme for a League of Nations, by which he hoped to secure a lasting peace between all Christian kings and princes. The idea originated with his adviser, a Frenchman, Antoine Marini, who had already been conferring with European rulers on the possibility of establishing an international Parliament.

The members of the League were to give up entirely their right to wage war independently; and the power to decide for or against peace was to lie with the Federation alone. On the other hand, the League was to protect its members against aggression on the part of States outside the League, trying first to settle all differences in a friendly way. The League was also to endeavour peaceably to prevent war between States who were not members.

All those who trespassed on public order and public peace were to find no protection anywhere, either from princes or their subjects.

A general assembly was to settle all questions, its members to consist of representatives of all the nations included in the League. Funds were to be derived from Church tithes and also from a three days' income of each prince and his subjects.

This scheme fell to the ground partly because the general desire for peace was not strong enough, and partly because it was opposed by the prelates, who claimed that any such proposal should come from the Pope and the Emperor, and not from the Czech King; but certainly it forms a very striking forerunner of the modern idea of a League of Nations, and a World Court of International Justice. To George of Poděbrad belongs the credit for having sown this good seed, four hundred and fifty years ago.

He was excommunicated for heresy in 1466, and after that he found himself obliged to fight enemies on every frontier, as well as some of his own nobles. Matthew of Hungary,

the famous Matthew Corvin, undertook a crusade against him, instead of stemming the advance of the Turks in his own land ; and finally George found it better to conclude a treaty with Poland, by which the Polish prince, Vladislav, was to succeed to the Bohemian throne. Thus he made friends with one of his neighbours, although it meant sacrificing the great wish of his heart—that of founding a national dynasty.

Just when the tide of events in the struggle seemed to have turned decidedly in his favour, death claimed him, on March 22nd, 1471. The fine façade of the Týn Kirk in Prague was built by King George, and still remains ; but a golden statue of the King, which represented him as pointing upward with his sword to a golden chalice, was destroyed by the Jesuits in 1623.

During this reign there was a special development of Czech art, which continued afterwards when the country was isolated by wars. King George himself encouraged the production of beautiful metal work in weapons and armour.

Growth of the Power of the Nobles

In accordance with the Treaty which the Estates had ratified, Prince Vladislav of Poland became Vladislav II of Bohemia in 1471 in succession to King George. His reign is chiefly remarkable for the growth of the power of the nobles, as opposed to the townsmen and the peasantry. It was a great reaction against democracy ; by new laws the peasants became virtually the serfs of the nobles on whose estates they lived, and had no recognized rights. The King was gentle and weak, and quite unable to cope with the aggressive nobles. His sympathies were against the Utraquists, and he secured the appointment in Prague of officials who were favourable to Rome. It was rumoured that the Utraquists of Prague were to be massacred ; riots broke out, the Town Hall was stormed, many citizens were killed and another " defenestration " took place, resulting in the death of the burgomaster.

Vladislav was much angered by these events, but he was unable to resist a party to which the majority of the people of Bohemia belonged.

In 1485 a compromise between the Utraquists and Romanists was concluded at Kutná Hora. Both parties undertook to respect the religious views of their opponents, and the Compacts were confirmed.

Vladislav spent most of his time in Hungary, of which country he had been elected King in 1490, after the death of Matthew Corvin. His Queen never even set foot on Bohemian soil. He arranged a double marriage which was to have a far-reaching result in Bohemia, for it helped to link the fortunes of the country with the Hapsburg race. His son Louis was to marry Maria, the sister of the Archduke Ferdinand, and his daughter Anne was to marry the Archduke. Louis had already been crowned King of Bohemia when only three years old. He succeeded his father on the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary in 1516, seven years later.

The representatives of the powerful families of Rožmitál and Rožmberk became now the great rivals for power in Bohemia, and they were much occupied with their own feuds when King Louis, in 1526, sent to Prague from Hungary to ask for help against the Turks. The Sultan Suleiman had already captured Belgrade. The Magyar nobility, under Zápolský, were not prepared for resistance, and only a few Bohemian troops arrived in time for the battle of Moháč, in which King Louis was disastrously defeated, August 29th, 1526. In his flight from the battlefield his horse fell into a swamp and he was drowned. The Turks followed up this victory by capturing Buda, and the greater part of Hungary became a Turkish province for nearly two centuries. Slovakia alone resisted their advances, and Bratislava increased in prominence, as the capital of Hungary in place of Buda.

With Louis there ended the short rule of the Polish or Jagailo dynasty in Bohemia, during which lawlessness and anarchy became rife. From 1490, when Vladislav was elected

King of Hungary, Slovakia and Bohemia were once more united under one rule and have remained so, except in 1619–1620, up to the present day.

The Powder Tower of Prague dates from the reign of Vladislav II, who built it in 1475. It is a very good example of what is known as the Vladislav style of Gothic architecture. So also is the famous "hall of Vladislav" in the Hradčany Castle, which was built between 1484 and 1502. The coronation banquet used to be held here, also tournaments; but Rudolph II allowed it to be used as a mere mart for tradesmen's wares. A chronicler who wrote at the time it was finished says that there was "no building like it in all Europe, none that were longer, higher and broader, and yet had no pillars."

CHAPTER IV

WE have now come to the beginning of the rule of the Hapsburgs in Bohemia, a rule which was to prove so disastrous to the nation.

After the battle of Moháč there were many candidates for the vacant throne of Bohemia. The Archduke Ferdinand, brother of the Emperor Charles V who claimed the crown through his wife Anne, the sister of Louis, was finally elected, having won over certain of the electors by bribes and promises. From this time, 1526, the rule of the house of Hapsburg over Bohemia lasted three hundred and ninety-two years, except for the short reign of Frederick, the Elector Palatine.

The Hapsburgs knew of only one way of restoring order to Bohemia, and that was by despotism. Outward order could most quickly be attained by the suppression of liberty; by compelling all to walk in one direction, and then calling it unity. And the new ruler did not hesitate to adopt this policy. At first he showed greater religious toleration to the Utraquists than might have been expected from his Spanish training; yet his policy was always to prevent the spread of Protestantism by force, and to make the Utraquists once more completely subject to Rome. He persecuted the Czech Brethren, expelling them from the towns immediately under his authority; and he imprisoned their elder, John Augusta, who had been making friendly advances to Luther. Many of the Brethren from Bohemia fled into Poland, but in Moravia they grew and flourished, and Ferdinand was unable to suppress them. He was also unsuccessful in getting the Bohemians to fight for him against the Protestant Elector of Saxony and the Schmalkaldic League of Protestant Princes. Yet all the time he was

working to increase the power of the Crown and to curtail the political and religious liberties of the people, and he was therefore often at variance with the Estates. In 1547 he marched a Spanish army against Prague, to punish it for its Protestant leanings, and when the town capitulated he took the opportunity to annul many of its privileges and those of other towns also. Four of the leaders were executed. Absolutism was asserting itself with a vengeance !

In the same year, 1547, Ferdinand had attempted to abolish the elective character of the succession to the throne of Bohemia, and to make it hereditary, in the Hapsburg line. Future kings were " recognized " by the Estates, not elected—with the exception of the Elector Palatine.

Although Ferdinand was little in Bohemia he has left in Prague a sign of his presence in the beautiful Renaissance building on the Hradčany Hill, known as the Belvedere. It commands a lovely view of the city ; and its graceful arcadings and green copper roof, seen between the trees of the garden in which it stands, are very attractive. It was a gift from Ferdinand to his Queen, Anne.

He was responsible for another building also in Prague : that is the Clementinum, a Jesuit College, which he founded in 1556, when he introduced the Jesuits into Bohemia. It was constantly enlarged up to 1715. Now it is to be rebuilt, in order to provide a suitable home for the valuable University Library, and the new National Library of the Republic.

Ferdinand I was succeeded by his son Maximilian in 1564, as Emperor, and as King of Hungary, as well as King of Bohemia. This King had perhaps a genuine feeling of toleration and respect for the religious views of others. He is credited with having said that " the prince who would claim to rule over the consciences of men would usurp the throne of God." He visited Prague at intervals in order to obtain sums of money for war against the Turks, and the Estates invariably tried to obtain concessions to Protestants in return. In 1567 he yielded to their wish so far as to declare the Compacts null and void ;

and in 1575 he recognized the Protestant Church as a religious body with its own separate administration. In spite of his toleration, he was never very popular with the Bohemians.

His son Rudolph II, who had been crowned King of Bohemia in 1575, succeeded to all his dominions in 1576. He lived at Prague almost continuously, and so it became practically the capital of the Empire, and was once more the centre of culture and especially of art. For Rudolph's tastes lay far from politics and diplomacy and the science of government. Painting, sculpture, mosaics—these were the things he loved; and in chemistry and astronomy also he took great interest. Tycho Brahe and Kepler, the astronomers, resided at his Court. He accumulated in the Hradčany Castle vast collections of works of art, which were plundered by the Saxons in 1632, and by the Swedes in 1648. His agents travelled all over Europe. The story of a "Madonna" painted by Albrecht Dürer, which was purchased at Venice, and carried by "four stout men" across the Alps to Prague, illustrates the pains that were taken in adding to his collections.

There is now still to be seen, overlooking the deep moat of the castle, a row of tiny houses, where Rudolph is said to have housed the alchemists, who professed to be able to transmute the baser metals into gold—or at least to be seeking the secret. It is known as "The Golden Street." The present-day occupiers stand at their doors, and invite passing strangers to see inside their little dwellings, and especially to look from the back windows overhanging the moat.

Poets and men of letters also came under the patronage of Rudolph. Bohemia enjoyed internal and external peace during the first years of his reign, except for the religious differences which still disturbed it. The Jesuits were becoming more prominent, and were using their endeavours to suppress the Czech Brethren, but with very qualified success, for they had little support from Rudolph, occupied with his arts.

Then troubles began to thicken round the King. The state of his health, which had long tended towards melancholia,

induced his brother, the Archduke Matthew, to concert a movement to depose him. There were grievances against him in all parts of his dominions which he took no steps to remove. Finally, Moravia, headed by Charles of Žerotín, joined Matthew, who had already won over Hungary and Austria. The Bohemian Estates remained faithful to Rudolph, but, led by Budovec of Budova, they demanded concessions in return for their loyalty. Rudolph after much hesitation and vacillation extending over nearly six months, during which time he tried the patience of the Protestant leaders to the utmost, at last signed the "Letter of Majesty" drawn up by them (9th July 1609).

The Letter of Majesty

According to its provisions the *Confessio Bohemica*, drawn up jointly by the Lutherans and the Bohemian Brethren in 1575, was recognized as the Confession of Faith of the Protestants; they were given the right of supervision over the University, and were authorized to elect the members of the Consistory, the governing body of the Utraquist Church. They were also empowered to appoint thirty "Defenders," to be chosen in equal number from the Protestant nobles, knights and townsmen.

By an agreement signed the same day between the Protestants and Romanists, they mutually guaranteed to men of all ranks full liberty of religious worship; and it was agreed that on the lands of the Crown (which included all ecclesiastical lands) both religious parties should be allowed to worship freely and to build churches.

But, satisfactory as this settlement must have seemed to the Protestant nine-tenths of the Bohemian nation, events showed how fruitless it was to extort concessions from a Hapsburg king.

Rudolph plotted with his cousin, the Archduke Leopold, against his brother Matthew, and Leopold's troops invaded

Bohemia from the south, committing great outrages, and being repulsed only with difficulty at Prague. Thereupon the Estates in anger forced Rudolph to abdicate, and Matthew became King of Bohemia in 1611.

Matthew was already advanced in years and, being childless, he was anxious to have the succession settled on his cousin Ferdinand, the Archduke of Styria. He summoned the Diet in Prague in 1617, to confer on this question. Ferdinand held a black record in his own lands, where he had conducted a ruthless persecution against the Protestants, all preachers and teachers having been expelled. Special sympathy was felt in Bohemia with these people because they were Slavs as well as Protestants; Slovenes, of what is now called Jugoslavia. In Ljubljana eleven waggons of books had been burned, and even Slovene grammars were forbidden. It is therefore not surprising that Ferdinand was not looked upon favourably in Protestant Bohemia. But threats and bribery were brought into play, so that only two votes were cast against him by the Estates, those of Count Thurn and Colonna of Fels; and after confirming all privileges of the land, including the "Letter of Majesty," Ferdinand was crowned on June 19th, 1617.

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On the strength of the agreement made with the Romanists, the Protestants of Broumov and of Hroby had begun to build churches for their own use, although the two towns formed part of the domains of dignitaries of the Roman Church. Whereupon one of these churches was forcibly destroyed, and the other closed, by the Romanist lords of the domains.

This grievance was laid before the "Defenders," who summoned a Protestant Assembly in Prague, and an appeal was sent to King Matthew to afford redress. Matthew answered with a threat, forbidding the Assembly to meet again.

The blame for this menacing message was laid upon the King's Roman Catholic councillors at Prague, Martinic and Slavata. On May 23rd, 1618, the whole Assembly, led by

Count Thurn, repaired fully armed to the castle, where they were to meet the King's councillors by appointment; and there, after heated discussions, Martinic and Slavata were seized and hurled from the windows into the moat below. Fabricius, their secretary, who protested, was treated in the same way. Not one of the three was killed, and Martinic and Slavata escaped almost unhurt. Yet this act of violence may be said to have started the Thirty Years War.

The old Council-chamber where the fatal "defenestration" took place can still be seen in the castle, little altered after three hundred years; the very windows from which the councillors were thrown are pointed out; and the distance to the moat forty feet below, where they fell.

The nobles recognized the full significance of their act. A provisional Government was immediately formed in Prague, of which Venceslas of Roupov was the President, and Thurn was given the command of the army. War was seen to be inevitable.

The Thirty Years War

At first the Bohemian forces under Count Thurn met with some success. Moravia, led by Lord Žerotín, was still hoping for a peaceful settlement, and held aloof, but the Hungarian Protestants with the Prince of Transylvania sided with Bohemia. The Assembly in Prague deposed Ferdinand, and elected, as King, Frederick, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, in August 1619. He was chosen as a leading Protestant, and also as the son-in-law of James I of England, from whom help was anticipated. Some say that Frederick was prevailed upon by his wife, Elizabeth, to accept the crown; her letters, on which this view is based, still exist. But her father, James I, was irritated with Frederick for taking such a position, and gave him no assistance, although the people of England were more than ready to show their sympathy in a practical way. Frederick the "Winter King," as he is called, only reigned a year. His lack of resolution and his general character made him wholly

unfit to steer the country through the storms now attacking it, though his winning manner gave him popularity. Bohemia was once more isolated in Central Europe, with enemies on every side. The King and Queen were crowned at Prague in November 1619. Earlier in the same year Matthew had died, and Ferdinand had been elected German Emperor.

By the following spring Spain, Italy, Poland, Bavaria—all the members of the " Roman Catholic League "—were making preparations against Bohemia, in support of Ferdinand, while Frederick's only ally was the Prince of Transylvania. But Moravia and Silesia were loyal to him now that a peaceful settlement seemed impossible.

The Battle of Bílá Hora

We have come to the blackest day in Bohemian history. The battle that sealed the fate of her independence was fought on November 8th, 1620, at Bílá Hora (" White Mountain ") a few miles outside Prague. The troops on both sides were about equal in numbers, but the Protestant army was already demoralized, ill-fed, ill-paid and on the verge of mutiny, while its generals were quarrelling amongst themselves. It is therefore not surprising that the day ended in a complete victory for the troops of Ferdinand. A small body of Moravian troops specially distinguished themselves for their bravery, continuing to fight to the last. But this was exceptional; the main part of the army was put to flight in an hour. On the next day the King and Queen made their escape into Silesia. Prague soon fell to the Imperialists, and on November 23rd Ferdinand received at Vienna a chest containing the charters of all the Bohemian privileges.

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The defeat of Bílá Hora was disastrous to the whole nation; it was a nemesis on the Czech nobility. In 1500 the free Czech peasants had been deprived of their rights, and had become mere serfs. Since then they had lost interest in the affairs of

their country. The Hussite battles were won by free peasants ; the battle of Bílá Hora was lost by mercenaries.

In the following year twenty-seven of the leading nobles, citizens and learned men of Bohemia who had supported the Elector Frederick were beheaded in the Old Town Square at Prague. They included the learned Budovec of Budova, a leader of the Czech Brethren, and Dr Gessenius, of Slovak origin, who had been Rector of the University. One of the swords used in the execution, with the twenty-seven names engraved on it, was found, it is said, in Edinburgh, and sent back to Prague in recent times.

The Counter-Reformation

The story of what is known as the Counter-Reformation, following the battle of the White Mountain, is painful reading. It has hardly a parallel in history.

Ferdinand's saying gives the key to it : " Better no population at all than a population of heretics."

At the beginning of the Thirty Years War there were 3,000,000 people in Bohemia, nearly all Protestants ; at the end, there were only 800,000, all (nominally) Roman Catholics. One Jesuit priest boasted that he alone had burned 60,000 Czech books, in the campaign against the teaching of the Reformation. The very possession of a Bible or hymnary was liable to be punished with death : even as lately as 1755, a forester was put to death for reading the Bible. Great numbers of the nobles and citizens went into exile rather than renounce their faith. The towns were repopulated by German immigrants belonging to the Church of Rome, and the estates of the nobles were confiscated and given to aliens, the military or political supporters of Ferdinand. It is estimated that two-thirds of the estates passed to aliens in this way.

The peasants were not allowed to go into exile, they were needed for the cultivation of the soil ; but they were forcibly

compelled to attend Mass. A series of peasant risings occurred, but all were ruthlessly crushed. Amongst the last to be subdued were the Chod peasants of south-west Bohemia, who rebelled against the serfdom to which they were reduced.

Meanwhile the Thirty Years War dragged slowly on, with victory first on one side and then on the other. Christian IV of Denmark came to the aid of the German Protestants, but was defeated, and made a separate peace. Then, in 1631–1632, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden turned the tide for a time against the Roman Catholics. Finally, through the intervention of France, the Hapsburgs suffered a series of disasters, and the Peace of Westphalia ended the war, in 1648.

The hopes of the Bohemian exiles were raised several times during these unhappy years. Some of them even returned to Prague when the Saxons occupied the city in 1631. But they were bitterly disappointed at the terms of the peace, for their country was left entirely under the heel of Austria, although the independence of the German Protestant princes was secured.

During these thirty years of conflict a new generation had arisen in Bohemia, a generation compelled to adhere, at least nominally, to the Roman Catholic doctrines; and, when the Protestant Swedes entered Prague in 1648, it was Jesuit-trained students of the University who successfully defended the Charles Bridge against them. This fact certainly weakened the case for the Protestants of Bohemia when terms of peace were being arranged.

Ferdinand III (who had succeeded Ferdinand II in 1637) resolutely declared during the peace negotiations that he would continue the war rather than allow the presence of a single Protestant in Bohemia or Moravia.

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The battle of the White Mountain took place only two months after the " Pilgrim Fathers " set sail for America in the *Mayflower*, and it was not very long before Czechs and Slovaks were following this example, and seeking in the New World a

refuge from persecution, and that liberty of conscience which was denied to them at home. The yearly stream of emigration has varied, but it has never ceased to flow. The Czechoslovak colony in the United States comprises now about a million and a quarter persons. They are engaged chiefly in agriculture or trade, but over two hundred of them have been either members of Congress or holders of other positions of public importance. American statistics place the Czechs next in order to the English-speaking and Scandinavian citizens as regards literacy. To meet the needs of this large reading public, there are issued in America 81 Czech and 40 Slovak periodicals, including 15 daily papers.

Nearly every family in Slovakia has at least one relative in the States, and this tends constantly to draw others in the same direction.

The struggle for independence was largely financed by American Czechoslovaks.

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CHAPTER V

IT is very refreshing to turn from the tragic story of the battle of Bílá Hora, and of the events which followed it, to the life of the second great hero of the Czechoslovak nation, Jan Amos Komenský, so well known under the Latin version of his name, Comenius.

Not that his life is devoid of tragedy ; on the contrary, it is full of it. But the light of the unconquerable ideal shone very brightly for him, and illuminated a path which would otherwise have been dark indeed.

Komenský was born in Moravia in 1592, during the reign of Rudolph II, and was brought up to follow the teachings of the Czech Brethren. He went to school first at Strážnice in Moravian Slovakia ; later, at the age of sixteen, he attended the grammar school at Přerov. His impressions of school life of that time are not favourable, for he afterwards described schools as the " terror of boys and the slaughter-houses of minds " ; as places where a hatred of literature and books was contracted. The whole aim was to impart a knowledge of Latin ; history, geography and arithmetic were usually only taught in the highest class of all.

From Přerov he went to the Calvinistic University at Herborn in Nassau, and registered at Heidelberg University in 1613.

After teaching for a while he was ordained in 1617, and given charge of a church at Fulnek in Moravia. Here he spent a few peaceful happy years, with wife and children, going out into the fields with them to study nature, trying to promote the culture of bees, writing books, including a manual of the Bible, in the intervals of attending to his duties as a pastor of the Czech Brethren. Then came the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. Spanish troops, let loose on the Protestants,

scoured the country, and Komenský had to flee for his life. His library was burned in the market-place, and his wife and children died of plague brought by the soldiers.

During his wanderings he wrote pamphlets for the consolation of his scattered flock, *Reflections on a Perfect Christianity* and *The Impregnable Castle* (God). He was given a refuge at Brandýs, by the Lord of Žerotín, himself one of the Brethren; and there in 1623 he wrote what is perhaps his greatest work, *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart.* It is sometimes called the Czech "Pilgrim's Progress," but it was written before Bunyan was even born. The general idea of the two works is similar; and both were written when the authors were undergoing persecution for their religious faith.

Komenský's book describes the world as a city, and himself as a pilgrim who travels through it, seeking his vocation. "Searchall" (with "the byname of Impudence") offers himself as his guide, and puts a bit into his mouth. "Falsehood" joins them and undertakes to interpret the meaning of everything they see. He puts spectacles, made of the glass of Illusion, and with the horn rims of Custom, over the pilgrim's eyes. These spectacles make distant things seem near, and near things distant; small things large, and large things small; ugly things beautiful, and beautiful things ugly; the white, black, and the black, white. "Nevertheless," says the pilgrim, "by raising my head and gazing upward, I was still able clearly to see things in their natural way."

From a very high tower he looks down on the city of the world, "crowded with people as with insects," and dominated by a castle, the castle of Worldly Wisdom. He is taken down into the city and is shown the six "orders" or vocations:

1. Domestic Life,
2. Trade,
3. Learning,
4. The Church,
5. The Law,
6. The Army,

and he sees nothing to satisfy him in any one of them. The conclusion he reaches is that true rest and satisfaction can only be found within, "in the secret place of the Most High." He describes in the closing chapter how Christ appears to him and gives him this command: "Abide in the world as long as I leave thee in it, as a pilgrim, a stranger, a foreigner, a guest, but remain with Me as a member of My household. I give unto thee the citizenship of heaven. Be careful therefore in the world. Have a mind that is, as much as possible, lifted both upward to Me and kindly downward to thy fellow-men."

Little wonder that this book, written by their leader, was much beloved by the Czech Brethren, and carried with them into exile when they had to choose between their country and their faith. In the words of their famous "Song of the Exiles,"

> "Nothing have we taken with us,
> Everything is lost;
> We have but our Bible of Kralice,
> Our 'Labyrinth of the World.'"

Although *The Labyrinth* does not touch on controversial points of doctrine, every attempt was made to destroy it. It was on the list of dangerous and forbidden books in 1749, and an edition was suppressed in Bohemia even in the nineteenth century.

As literature, it is a true work of art, and also gives very valuable pictures of contemporary society.

The description of a storm at sea which occurs in one of the later editions is said to be taken from the writer's own experiences on his voyage to England in 1641.

In 1628 the Protestants were finally expelled from Bohemia, and Komenský left his native land, never to return. He took refuge at Lesna, in Poland, where be began work again as a schoolmaster, and wrote his *Janua Linguarum*, or *Gate of Languages*. This book, written in Latin, remained in use as a school-book for nearly two centuries, and, with later works, has kept his name alive amongst teachers to the present day. It comprised phrases on many subjects, written in Latin, French,

German and Italian, and aimed at teaching languages and general information, at the same time and in an interesting way. It was a great innovation, but the world was ready for it, and it was translated into twelve European languages, as well as into Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Evelyn in his *Diary* (1658) refers to it as one of the school-books of his son Richard.

While at Lesna, Komenský got into touch with a London merchant, Samuel Hartlib, who sympathized with his aims, and through whose influence he was invited to England. There is to be seen in the British Museum a copy of the sermon preached by John Gauden, sometime Bishop of Exeter, and then of Worcester, before " the Hon. House of Commons," on November 29th, 1640. He took for his text, " Love the truth and peace," and at the close he drew the attention of the House to " the noble endeavours of two great and publique Spirits who have laboured much for Truth and peace, I meane, Commenius and Duræus: both famous for their learning and integrity, and not unknowne, I am sure, by the fame of their works, to many of this Honourable, learned and pious Assembly." He goes on to urge that they should be invited to England. " See and weigh their noble and excellent designs."

In response to the invitation which followed, Komenský came to London the next year, and was well received. The Long Parliament voted money for endowing three colleges at Chelsea, Winchester and the Savoy, where his methods of education could be applied. But the unsettled state of the country, then verging on civil war, prevented the development of the scheme, and Komenský left England in some disappointment. In a letter written from London he speaks of the great piety of the people, and how they take their Bibles to church, look up the texts, and repeat the sermons at home. Greek and Hebrew, he says, are studied even by ladies, that they may understand the Bible better. And he was much struck by the rich literature and the number of books sold; remarking that there were not so many bookstalls at Frankfort Fair as could be seen any day in London.

Of his own reception in London, he writes: "I live as a friend among friends; though not so many visit me as would do so if they knew that I could speak English, or if they had more confidence in their own Latin, or if they had not such a high opinion of me."

Several years later, Milton, in the dedication to Hartlib of his tractate "Of Education," writes of "a person sent hither by some good Providence from a far country to be the occasion and incitement of great good to this Island," and later in the same letter he refers to Komenský's educational schemes: "What many modern Januas and Didactics, more than ever I shall read, have projected."

While in London, Komenský wrote a book, called *Via Lucis*, which treats of the way to bring about universal peace. As a means to this end he proposed the introduction of:

1. Universal books
2. Universal schools
3. A universal college
4. A universal language.

It is only necessary to study other works by Komenský to learn that no mere intellectualism would have satisfied him. The whole trend of his teaching is towards the formation of character, and he had unlimited faith in man's capabilities for good. A few quotations from his *Great Didactic* will illustrate this:

"O that God would have pity on us, that we might find some universal method by which all that occupies the mind of man might be brought into relation with God!"

"To seek what is great is noble, was ever noble and will be ever noble. What thou hast begun with God cannot remain without result."

"We seek God by noticing the signs of His divinity in all things created."

"Whatever is learned from Scripture should convey a lesson of faith, charity and hope."

"What are the rich without wisdom but pigs stuffed with bran? What are the poor who have no understanding of affairs but asses laden with burdens?"

"Let none believe that any can really be a man unless he have learned to act like one."

"Man is naturally capable of acquiring a knowledge of all things, since, in the first place, he is the image of God. Now omniscience is the chief among the properties of God, and it follows that the image of this must be reflected in man. And why not?"

"It is not necessary that anything be brought to a man from without, but only that that which he possesses rolled up within himself be unfolded and disclosed."

In scope and breadth of view his educational schemes were centuries in advance of his time.

M. W. Keatinge, writing at the close of the nineteenth century, terms him, "the prince of schoolmasters . . . the broadest-minded, the most far-seeing, the most comprehensive, and in some respects the most practical of the writers who have put pen to paper on the subject of education. . . . He lays stress on the spiritual aspect of true education."

His enlightened views included such ideas as the following:

1. Equal opportunities for all, rich and poor, boys and girls, alike.

2. Very rare punishments; example and kindness were to be the chief means used. He illustrated this, in his simple way, by pointing out that sunshine and rain are constantly with us; thunderstorms are rare.

3. The importance of play in the child's education.

4. The importance of first impressions, and of pre-natal influences; the danger of frightening children.

5. The necessity for clean, bright schoolrooms, with gardens if possible, and a happy atmosphere generally.

6. The development of the reasoning faculties, as opposed to the mere burdening of the memory.

The curriculum he desired was to include world-history,

geography, politics, singing, husbandry, arts and handicrafts; and he claimed that the foundation of every subject can be laid in the very earliest training of the child. For instance, geography begins with the child's knowledge of its immediate surroundings, and of their relation to its mother's knee.

He was in no doubt as to the justice and expediency of giving to women as good an education as to men.

"No reason can be given why women should be excluded from the learning of languages and other wisdom. For they are created in the image of God as men are, and will also take part in the Grace and the Kingdom to come; they are equally gifted with mind, capable of apprehending wisdom, and often more capable than we are of seizing the fine shaft of wit; they equally can turn their mind to great things, such as the administration of people, regions, estates, and even whole kingdoms; and they also are able to give advice to kings and princes, to act as doctors and prophetesses, and to be instruments in the almighty hand of our Lord. . . . Why then should we not grant them more than A B C, and drive them away from further learning and books?"

His enthusiasm for better education arose from the conviction that it offered the only hope of healing the dissensions of Church and State; and he suffered much in being shut out from the opportunity of founding schools in his own land, where education had been left entirely in the hands of the Jesuits.

He turned with particular energy to his educational works when there seemed great hope of his being able to go back to Bohemia to organize the schools there; that is, after the successes of Gustavus Adolphus in 1631, and when the Saxons had driven the Roman Catholics out of Bohemia in 1632.

It was in 1648 that he became Bishop, or Elder, of the Unity of Czech Brethren.

After leaving England he went to Sweden to which, as a Protestant country, the eyes of the Bohemian exiles were always hopefully turned, seeing there the possible deliverers of

their unhappy land. In 1651 he organized schools in Hungary for Prince Sigismund Rákóczy, producing there his most popular book, *Orbis Pictus*, the very first picture-book for children.

Finally he settled in Amsterdam, where he established a printing-press in 1659, and continued to issue editions of his works till his death in 1670.

Think what it must have meant for a peace-loving man and an idealist, with his heart set on publishing his ideas, and on putting them into practical execution for the benefit of his beloved country and of the whole world—think what it must have meant for such a man to be driven from country to country, without any permanent home; to have had his library twice burned by the soldiery, and with it much of his life-work; to have been dependent for his livelihood on private patronage; to die still an exile, without having seen one ray of light break through the cloud of dark oppression in his native land; and yet to have retained to the end his serenity, his indomitable courage and perseverance, and his faith in the ultimate triumph of right; still thanking God for having made him "a man of aspirations." Under conditions such as have hardly any parallel, he produced over a hundred books, and is now recognized as the pioneer of our modern system of education.

With other exiles, Komenský was bitterly disappointed that the Czech Protestants were not considered in the Peace of Westphalia; and then for the first time he gave up hope of seeing his beloved country again.

In 1650 he wrote the pathetic *Bequest of the Dying Mother of the Unity of Brethren*, in which he bequeathed to the Czech and Moravian nation all he possessed, including love for the pure truth of God and desire for a fuller understanding of it; the Book of God, the Holy Bible; love for the ordinances of the Church; zeal in serving the Lord; eagerness in polishing, cleansing and fostering their dear and beloved native language; and a better, more diligent and successful upbringing of youth.

In this " Bequest " occur the words quoted by President Masaryk on the memorable day when he read his first message to the National Assembly of the new Czechoslovak Republic, December 1918 :

" I also believe before God that after the passing of the storms of wrath brought down upon our heads by our sins, the rule over thine own possessions shall be restored to thee, O Czech people ! "

It now stands as a fulfilled prophecy.

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The tercentenary of Komenský's birth was celebrated publicly in 1892, in Great Britain, in Germany, and throughout the civilized world. In his own country alone all such observances were prohibited.

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In 1753 a school for boys and girls was founded by Czechs near Bradford in Yorkshire, with the aim of putting into practice Komenský's educational principles. The founders had very little money, so they bought the cheapest land they could get, considered unsuitable for building purposes because it was on a slope, but the result has only been to add to the picturesqueness of the school buildings and their environment. The site was named Fulneck, after the village in Moravia where Komenský was pastor. No one in charge can now speak the Czech language, but the traditions are not forgotten, and a bust of Komenský maintains a prominent place. To this school Lord Oxford and Asquith and his brother were sent in their early youth.

CHAPTER VI

THE deplorable condition of Bohemia at the end of the Thirty Years War can hardly be exaggerated, with all her best sons in exile, her population reduced by three-quarters, her towns and villages destroyed, her lands devastated, and her peasants deprived of all their liberty.

In Slovakia, Protestantism was never wholly stamped out. The Czech Brethren were persecuted until, by 1670, not one was left in the country, but other forms of Protestantism were allowed, and the language was kept pure by the use of that " Bible of Kralice " which was forbidden in Bohemia.

During the Seven Years War under Maria Theresa (1756–1763), when Prussia and Austria were struggling for possession of Silesia, Bohemia was again a battlefield, and suffered much.

The policy of Maria Theresa was to centre the administration entirely in Vienna, limiting the power of the Bohemian Estates, and abolishing the separate law-courts, thus depriving Bohemia of the measure of autonomy she had hitherto enjoyed.

Her son Joseph II continued this policy ; but in his character of " enlightened despot," he issued an " Edict of Toleration " in 1781. This permitted Protestants to return to Bohemia, and to settle there freely ; but they were obliged to choose between the Reformed and Lutheran Churches ; the Czech Brethren were still banned.

Another progressive act of this Emperor was the abolition of serfdom. Peasants were free to choose whatever trade or study they desired, and to move as they pleased from place to place.

Over against these reforms, we must set his system of education, planned with a view to making German the only

language of his dominions. In schools, churches, law-courts, German alone was to be used, although numbers of the people of Bohemia only spoke and understood Czech.

Czech national life seemed to be absolutely extinct in the towns, when, at the close of the eighteenth century, there came a stirring of the dead bones. The first signs of awakening came from the Bohemian nobles, but the national revival was mainly the work of scholars. Three different classes of writers contributed to it; first, grammarians and lexicographers, who restored the dying language; secondly, historians who recalled the lessons of the past; thirdly, journalists who educated the people politically, and roused them, not only to hope for their freedom, but to work for it. To these we must add the poets, whose writings were an inspiration to the whole movement.

Of grammarians, Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829) was the greatest. He wrote a Czech grammar and also a grammar of Old or Church Slavonic; and he did much by his writings to promote a feeling of kinship between the different branches of the Slav race.

Then came Josef Jungmann (1773–1847), the son of a peasant from Central Bohemia. He strove to perfect and preserve the language. His greatest work was his Czech-German Dictionary, the most complete and valuable that had then appeared.

Of the historians, two were pre-eminent. Pavel Josef Šafařík (1795–1861) was a Slovak, the son of a Protestant pastor, born in the district between the Hernad and the Hron. He is best known by his colossal work on *Slavonic Antiquity*, which won him wide fame in the world of letters, although it was never finished.

But the central figure of the national revival was the great historian, František Palacký (1798–1876). He was born in Moravia, the son of a village schoolmaster in whose family the traditions of Hus had been preserved; so he was sent to be educated in Slovakia, first to the Protestant Grammar School at Trenčín, and then to the College at Bratislava. The Prot-

estants still enjoyed more freedom of conscience in Slovakia than in Bohemia or Moravia.

While at the college he made friends with an Irish jockey, who lent him many English books, and it was partly through the study of Robertson's *History of Scotland* that he early conceived the plan of writing a history of his own nation. In the meantime he was acquiring a very thorough education, studying foreign languages and literature, and laying a sound foundation for his life-work. At the invitation of Dobrovský he went to Prague, and there came in touch with several Czech noblemen who became greatly interested in his proposed undertaking. Through their help he was able to make immense researches in the Czech archives hidden away in old castles and mansions. Later, the appointment of historiographer to the Bohemian Estates was given to him, with the reluctant consent of the government at Vienna.

His *History of the Czech People in Bohemia and Moravia* is a great and scholarly work ; but above all it is great because of the inspiring and regenerating influence it had upon the Czechs themselves. It was educative in the highest sense, encouraging them to learn from past failures, and to work for their freedom with purified aims and a more exalted ideal. Palacký's outlook on life is thus interpreted by a writer of his own race : To him the highest aim of humanity was what he called " božnost'," literally, Godlikeness. His conviction was that man is only truly man in so far as he is like God. He claimed that in the innermost sanctuary of every human being there is something which responds to God, and to the summons to progress towards " božnost' " : something which, once awakened, makes him strive by an inner necessity for absolute good, absolute truth, absolute beauty and harmony. And he saw all history, whether of individuals or of nations and races, as the history of this progress—marked, it is true, by apparent periods of stagnation or even retrogression, but still a progress.

Palacký may therefore be said to have reached the modern

conception of history, as concerned less with the movements of persons than with the development of ideas.

To quote another Czech writer :

" The conclusion at which he arrives is that the Czech nation, in spite of its numerical inferiority, was always strong when it served an ideal, and through that ideal the higher good of mankind, its progress and morality, and on the other hand that it always became weak when it lost faith in its ideals. This inference induced him to believe that his people could recover its spiritual strength if it were animated by a new ardour, a new idealism. In other words, according to him, to be a Czech in the best sense meant to do some higher duty than to live but one's private or national life without thinking of others " (Dr F. Chudoba in his *Survey of Czech Literature*).

But it was not only as an historian that Palacký served his nation. He was its political leader and spokesman as well. He saw that there were three possible political systems in Austria : Centralism, which would give the hegemony to the Germans ; Dualism, which would divide it between the Germans and the Magyars ; and Federalism, which would secure equality of rights to all the races of the Monarchy ; and he hoped and strove for the establishment of this third system. A saying of his has often been quoted : " If there were no Austria it would be necessary to create one ; " but there is a later saying, which is in the form of a prophecy, and which became a dictum during the Great War : " Before Austria was we were, and when Austria no longer is, we still shall be." He had ceased to fix his hopes on the dream of a reformed and just Austria.

In 1876, when the great history was completed, a banquet was held at Prague to celebrate the event. The substance of Palacký's speech, which he called his " testament," was : " We must educate ourselves and work."

This was also the keynote of the life-work of Karel Havlíček (1821–1856). He maintained that a well-educated nation

cannot be kept in subjection; and by means of his newspaper, *Národní Noviny*, he trained the Czech people in politics and the duties of citizenship.

The Austrian Government feared his influence, and therefore persecuted him, suppressing his paper and deporting him to the Tyrol.

Next to Palacký, he was the greatest and most popular political leader, although he only lived to be thirty-five. Like Palacký, he was entirely against any attempt to win freedom by violent methods.

"Our nation must not forget that it is fighting for justice, that it has no right to imitate the violent procedure of its adversaries, and that its triumph must be that of civilization."

These noble words are Palacký's, but they represent the spirit in which the whole work of the liberation of the Czechoslovak people was conceived and carried out, and the spirit which is governing it to-day.

Chief of the poets who inspired the national movement was Jan Kollár (1793–1852) whose long epic poem "The Daughter of Sláva," struck a note which stirred to its depths the whole Slav world. He was a Slovak, born at the foot of the Carpathians, and for a time was pastor of the Slovak Lutheran Church in Budapest. The sorrows of the Slavs and their subjection form the basis of his great work, and yet there breathes through it all a sense of unlimited hope, a vision of a redeemed humanity. He rose above any narrow sense of nationalism to the broader, deeper understanding of humanity as a whole; striving, struggling, apparently failing, yet always drawn upward towards the unconquerable ideal. His yearnings were naturally towards the regeneration of his own people. Yet he said: "Whenever you say *Slav* always think of *man*."

He taught that there could be no true nationalism without a love of humanity, and that even a great nation would be cursed by mankind if it forgot that *man* was the end, and "Slav," "German" or "Frenchman" merely a stepping-stone to the goal.

"He who puts captives in bonds, he is a bond-slave himself," is one line in "The Daughter of Sláva."

Like Hus, like all who see clearly, he had supreme confidence in the triumph of truth and right. The error of years, he sang, could be overthrown in a day.

There were other poets of note, amongst them Čelakovský and Erben, who fanned the flame of national aspiration. The Czech Museum was founded in Prague in 1818, and its quarterly journal, edited by Palacký, became the centre of literary life. The recognition of the great importance of the drama as an educating and awakening influence resulted in the building of the National Theatre (Národní Divadlo) in Prague, for the performance of Czech plays. It was begun in 1868 and opened, amidst great national rejoicings, with Smetana's *Libuše*, in June 1881. In August of the same year the beautiful building was destroyed by fire. Nothing daunted, the people began at once to subscribe for its re-erection. Money flowed in from all parts of the country—even the very poor gave eagerly of their pence—and in 1883 it was re-opened. To-day the theatre, with a dedication in great gold letters across the front, "NÁROD SOBĚ" ("The Nation to Itself"), is one of the most striking modern buildings on the river embankment, and it has won a world-wide reputation for the high standard of its productions.

In 1848, when revolution was in the very air of Europe, the Czechs sent a deputation to Vienna, with the hope of obtaining from the Emperor the official recognition of the Czech language, equal rights for Czechs and Germans, and other reforms. The Emperor made a very favourable reply, promising to grant almost everything that had been asked, and the news was received with great enthusiasm in Prague. At last their hopes of freedom were about to be realized!

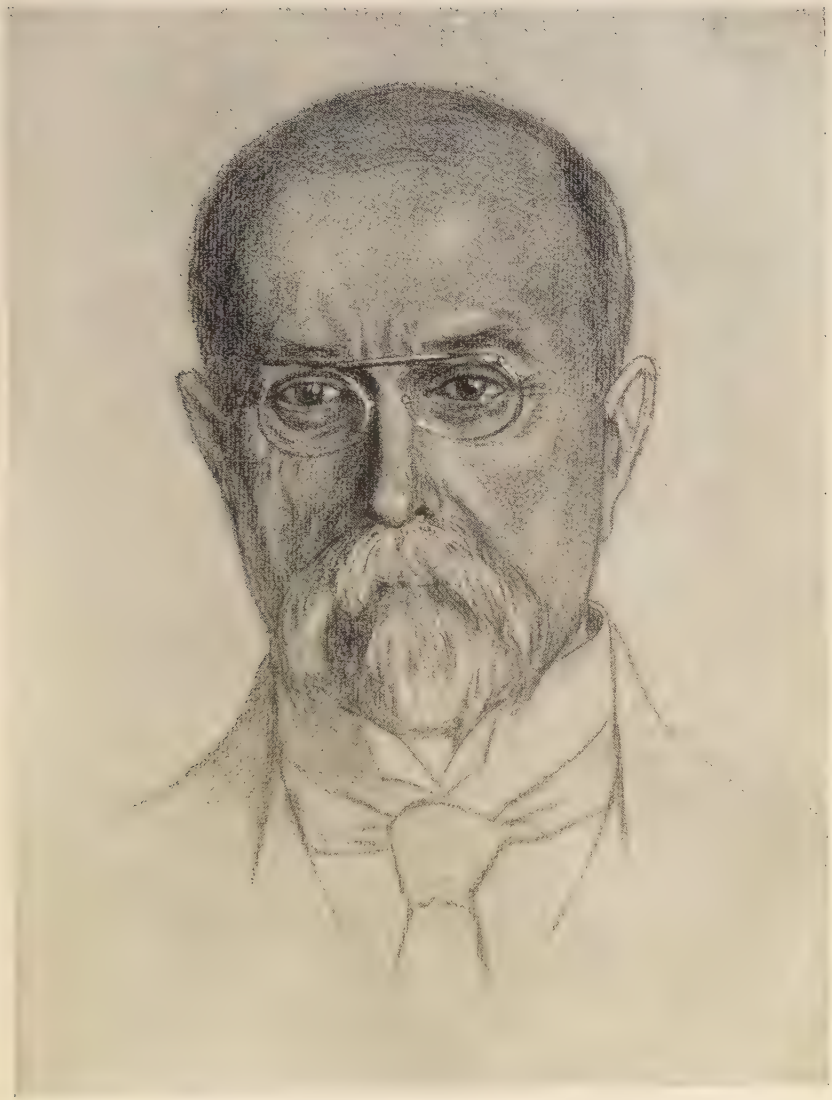
A Congress of Slavs, under the presidency of Palacký, was held at Prague later in the same year; a parallel to the Congress of Germans held at Frankfort. Great numbers of Austrian troops were drafted into Prague for the occasion. During the Congress some of the soldiers, under the impression that their

commander was being insulted by Slavs, began to fire on the people in the streets, a panic ensued, and there was some desultory fighting, with the result that martial law was proclaimed. These events led up to a new period of absolutism, and of persecution of Czech patriots. It was then that the courageous Havlíček was deported.

The year 1867 marks the beginning of the "Dual Monarchy," a disastrous year for the Slovaks who were thus severed from their brothers, and hardly less so for Bohemia. By an agreement made between the Magyars and the Crown, without consulting the other races of the Monarchy, Hungary then became independent of Austria in all internal affairs. After that change the policy of Magyarization of the subject-races of Hungary was carried on ruthlessly. Though forming nearly one-third of the population, the Slavs were practically unrepresented in the Hungarian Parliament, and were therefore powerless to resist oppression.

Magyar was made the only language of instruction in all the primary and secondary schools under State control. Up to 1875 the Slovaks had three secondary schools which they had founded and maintained themselves. These were then forcibly closed by the Hungarian Government, and every effort was made to discourage the people from using their native language in any way whatsoever. Measures were also taken to keep the Slovaks and the Czechs apart. It was made very difficult for Czechs to travel in Slovakia, and for Slovaks to be educated in Bohemia.

Such was the condition of affairs when the man who was to lead his people out into freedom—the Moses of these Israelites in Egypt—first began to attract attention by his writings.



33. T. G. MASARYK, FIRST PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CHAPTER VII

THE Czechs used to call their great historian Palacký "Otec Národa" ("Father of his People"), because he was their leader in their struggles for freedom. To-day that name seems to belong even more truly to the first President of the young Republic.

In his introduction to Count Lützow's *Bohemia*, Masaryk writes:

"Bohemia, though one of the lesser nations, gave more than one man to the world, 'revered in all hearts that love light.'"

As such he names Hus, Chelčický, Komenský and George of Poděbrad. "All these are men whose significance stretches far beyond the frontiers of their native country."

To these four names must be added a fifth, that of Masaryk himself.

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Masaryk comes from the same part of the country as Komenský. He was born at Hodonín in Moravia, on March 7th, 1850. Most appropriately, he unites in his person the two branches of the nation, for his father was a Slovak, and his mother was a Moravian, whose family came from the fertile Haná district.

His father was a coachman on one of the Imperial estates, and they were very poor. He tells the story of his early life, to show how again and again he got something absolutely different from what he wanted. He had no early ambitions, but at a school examination the kindly dean picked him out as a lad of parts, who ought to become a teacher. So he went to a secondary school. But he had no desire to be a teacher, and though he did his best, it didn't work! He tried a handi-

craft. His mother took him to Vienna, to a locksmith in whose family she had been a servant, and there he was employed to make little horse-shoes, possibly for Slovak boots. This did not please him even for a day. He was frightfully lonely, but he had one solace. In his little trunk he had a few books, all that was left to him of school, amongst them an atlas, in which it was his greatest joy to " travel." But he shared a room with many other boys, and one day he found his books gone. This was too much for him ; and he fled home. Next he became a blacksmith's boy, and he enjoyed this more than anything he had yet done. He now had an ideal—to be a farrier ! He gave himself up to it with zest, and it worked ! But when he was fifteen one of his former teachers met him, and persuaded his parents to put him to teaching again. He says, " My mother, bless her ! always wanted more for me than I wanted for myself." Teaching was not his ideal, but this time he found it interesting.

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In course of time he graduated as a doctor of philosophy of Vienna University, where later he obtained a lectureship. It was in Vienna that he spent his early married life. His wife was Miss Charlotte Garrigue, an American lady, whom he had met at Leipzig in 1877. She was his helpful and sympathetic colleague in all his high aims, and in all his struggles against poverty, and opposition, and misunderstanding, never losing confidence in his ultimate success, even at the times of his greatest unpopularity.

In his first book, *Suicide*, written while he was still at Vienna, he attributes the epidemic of suicides in Europe to a lack of the religious sense. And he gives the key to his own idealism in these words :

" Who redeemed mankind ? Neither a politician, nor an economist, nor a socialist, nor a demagogue. It is really sublime how in the social unrest of his time Christ keeps aloof from all politics. How easy it would have been for Him to win men through political and socialistic agitation ! He, however,

demands the perfection of character, requires the deepening of feeling; He wishes people to become good because He knows that only thus will they find contentment for their souls."

And again:

"Has there ever been a better, more exalted, more divine life than that of Christ?"

"Christ's whole life is Truth. God's Son is the highest simplicity; He shows purity and sanctity in the true sense of the word. Nothing external attaches to Him and His life, no formalism, no ritualism; everything comes from the inner being, everything is thoroughly true, thoroughly beautiful, thoroughly good."

In 1882 the University of Prague was divided into two parts, a Czech and a German—a great triumph for the Czechs—and Dr Masaryk was called to be a professor in the Czech division. From that time onward, till the Great War, Prague was the centre of his activities. In devoting himself to the great task of freeing his people, he saw clearly that it was a moral and spiritual issue, and that the nation must become ripe for freedom before it could regain it.

He wrote in *The Czech Question* (1895):

"Independence will not preserve and save any nation. The nation must preserve its independence; morality and education will be our salvation. Even political independence is only a means to attain the righteous living of the nation—we lost it when we ceased to live morally as a nation."

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"Who prevents us even now, without political and economic independence, from studying the world's culture, recognizing our shortcomings, and training our people to become a nation, the intellectual, moral and cultural equal of the foremost nations in the world?"

And again:

"What is needed is an inner renovation, without which there is no meaning in political liberty: what is needed is

active love for one's neighbour, without which there is no true patriotism; what is needed is to love, to seek and to defend the truth; what is needed is to establish public life upon the basis of morality and truth."

To him the Reformation was not an incident in past history; it was a process still going on. He writes: "History is often called a teacher and a judge. It is, above all, an obligation. The significance of our reformation determines the trend of our entire national being. Every conscious son of the Czech people finds in the story of our reformation his own ideal. Every son of the Czech people who knows Czech history must decide either for the Reformation or for the Counter-Reformation. . . . Like all genuine reformation, that of our country is still incomplete. Reformation means an incessant re-forming, uninterrupted renewal, a striving for heights, a constant process of perfection; it means growth."

He was doing his own part in this great work. In training generations of students, in his lectures and his books, and as a member and instructor of the "Sokols," he was leavening the thought of the nation; and later also through the political party which he founded, known as the Realist Party, and by his daily newspaper, *Čas*—(Time).

But he was not then popular in his own country except with a small band of followers. The Church denounced him as an atheist, the State feared him as a Czech patriot, the animosity of the Czechs themselves was roused by his outspoken criticisms.

Yet he remained always hopeful, and in an address given on his sixtieth birthday, March 7th, 1910, he expressed himself satisfied with the signs of progress. "With us in Bohemia right ideas *do* penetrate, more quickly perhaps than we are ready to admit."

He had shown his fearless passion for truth in ways that were unpalatable to the romanticists of his nation. The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth produced many literary forgeries which deceived even the learned

for a time ; such as Charles Bertram's MSS on Roman Britain ; Macpherson's *Ossian* ; and in Bohemia, the so-called MSS of Králové Dvůr and Zelená Hora. These last aroused great excitement when they were " discovered " in 1817, as the very earliest specimens of Czech literature. Czech artists and musicians made use of their themes, and they were given a high place as treasured memorials of the glorious past. Masaryk took a leading part in showing them to be forgeries, thus bringing down on his head the anathemas of many of his compatriots. But his answer was : " A nation that is not founded on truth does not deserve to survive."

It was love of truth and justice which led him to champion the cause of the Jew, Hilsner, wrongly accused of ritual murder in 1899 ; and he found himself fighting all the latent superstition of his race. He won the victory ; the Jew was acquitted ; but again the charge of being " unpatriotic " was levelled against him.

He made yet another notable stand for truth in 1909, against the Austrian Government, when he proved that the Austrian minister, Count Aehrenthal, had made use of forged documents as evidence for the existence of revolutionary plots in Croatia for union with Serbia. Masaryk had been elected a member of the Austrian Parliament in 1907, and it was in this capacity that he exposed the whole intrigue.

In his busy life, he yet found time to study the literature of all the chief European nations. Twice he went to Russia for purposes of study, and visited Tolstoy. His work *The Spirit of Russia* (1913) showed his clear grasp of the conditions there, which convinced him of the hopelessness of depending on Russian aid in the Czech struggle for freedom. How right he was, events have proved.

When the Great War began, he saw it as a war between two different conceptions of civilization and culture, and he decided that the only course for his nation lay in opposition to Austria. The question that chiefly exercised him was " Are we truly ripe for liberty ? "

It soon became clear that Austria could not be opposed at home ; organized activities must be carried on abroad. Accordingly he left Prague for Rome in December 1914, to gather information about the prospects of the war, and the opinions of neutrals. On his way back he was warned that he had been followed and would be arrested as soon as he set foot on Austrian soil. So he settled at Geneva in January 1915, and was henceforth an exile, until he returned, to be triumphantly welcomed, as first President of Czechoslovakia.

Before leaving Prague he had got into touch with Dr Beneš, whose name is now world-famous as Foreign Minister, and who had been one of his most devoted students at Prague University. A secret society was formed, called the Maffia, and directed in Masaryk's absence by Dr Beneš, Dr Šámal, and Dr Rašín. It was largely through the work of this society that everything worked so smoothly at the actual time of the revolution.

In Geneva Masaryk opened a propaganda campaign on behalf of his nation. An American Czech, who was in Bohemia when war broke out, had undertaken to raise funds in the United States from the Czechoslovak communities there, and from this source the finances of the whole liberation movement were mainly drawn.

In Prague political oppression was increasing ; Dr Kramář, Dr Rašín and others were arrested in May 1915 and imprisoned.

Already Czechs in Russia were organized in the " Družina " (Battalion), Czechs in France were serving in the Foreign Legion, and many Czechs in the Austrian army were deserting to the Russians.

Some were being caught, and receiving the death penalty. Masaryk writes in his *War Memories* :

" These soldiers were being punished for what I, a member of Parliament, had advocated ; could I, dare I, do less than the simple soldier-citizen whom I had encouraged in his Slavonic and anti-Austrian feelings ? "

He had to fight out with himself the moral problem involved, when he, a humanitarian, started out to organize fighting forces.

He made his decision, and he never swerved from it; but he tells us in his *War Memories* that it was burning torture to him to urge on the boys to a life-and-death battle. He could not fight himself, but he resolved to shirk no danger and to show no fear. So it came about that this scholar of European renown, this quiet, studious man of letters, at the age of sixty-five, travelled all over a war-ravaged Europe, and organized an army, making what he calls "this strange unthought-of journey round the world."

In October 1915 he came to London, and settled there for nearly two years, accepting a post as lecturer at King's College. This was offered to him through the friendship and influence of Principal Burrows, Dr Seton-Watson and Mr Wickham Steed, then editor of the *Times*. He inaugurated the "School of Slavonic Studies" by a lecture on "The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis."

In England with the help of his friends he did much valuable propaganda work, destroying deep-rooted misconceptions by the sheer force of truth. He writes in his *War Memories*: "The psychology of propaganda is less simple than it may seem—to be effective it must be honest—exaggeration and falsehood do not succeed. Even amongst ourselves there were individuals who looked upon the art of politics as a sort of cheating, and who tried to spread "patriotic" untruths. We put a stop to that, but we could not prevent echoes of these untruths from circulating, and our enemies naturally used them against us."

His lectures at King's College, his published articles, and the "bookshop" in Piccadilly Circus all helped to give much-needed enlightenment in England.

In February 1916 the Czechoslovak National Council was inaugurated in Paris. Before the end of the war it was recognized as a Government by the Allied Powers. Masaryk was its President, and Dr Beneš was the General Secretary.

In December 1916 Masaryk was condemned to death by

the Austrian Government. Not being able to reach him, they imprisoned his daughter, Dr Alice Masaryk, who was only released after an energetic press campaign abroad.

When the Russian Revolution came, in March 1917, Masaryk arranged to go to Russia, and finally left England in May. It need hardly be said that he was in constant danger during these travels. His chief aim in going to Russia was to organize the Czechoslovak prisoners of war into a fighting army to be used on the Western front. He, a civilian, succeeded in organizing this army, but it was in the face of immense difficulties, for the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 had brought with it laxity and chaos, and his army of volunteers had to learn strict discipline amid such surroundings. Fortunately the influence of "Sokol" training was a help; and Masaryk's own character could not fail to make a profound impression on the soldiers. He encouraged in them the Hussite spirit, and the regiments received the names of national heroes, such as Hus and Žižka, and used the Hussite symbols.

Then came the task of transferring the army to France, and Masaryk left Moscow on March 7th, 1918, his sixty-eighth birthday, to make the necessary arrangements. He travelled through Siberia, to Vladivostok and Japan, where he arranged for transports; then to British Columbia, Chicago and Washington.

This army never fought in France. The famous Anabasis of the Czech Legions, the "Retreat of the 100,000," is well known, how on their march eastward, after the separate peace made by the Bolsheviks at Brest Litovsk, they were pursued by Germans, obstructed by Bolsheviks, and had to fight their way also in Siberia against numbers of armed German and Austrian prisoners; how they obtained possession of the whole of the Siberian railway, to Vladivostok, thus cutting off hundreds of thousands of war prisoners, and vast quantities of supplies of food from the German and Austrian armies.

This was the achievement which Mr Lloyd George called "one of the greatest epics of history," and of which Franklin

K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior under President Wilson, wrote to a friend, in September 1918 :

" A great world, isn't it ? And the greatest romance is . . . the advance of the Czechoslovaks across 5000 miles of Russian Asia—an army on foreign territory, and without a government, holding not a foot of land, who are recognized as a nation ! This stirs my imagination, as I think nothing in the war has done since Albert of Belgium stood fast at Liége."

The achievements of the army he had organized helped to pave the way for Masaryk's diplomatic successes. In May and June 1918, the American Government, followed by the English, French and Italian Governments, expressed sympathy with the Czechoslovak and Jugoslav claims for independence. On June 29th, the French Government recognized the National Council as the supreme authority and the future basis of the Czechoslovak Government.

Great Britain followed suit on August 9th, and the United States on September 2nd.

The Czechoslovak " Declaration of Independence " was issued from Washington on October 18th, and ten days later Prague proclaimed the establishment of an independent State. Thus the " bloodless revolution " was successfully achieved.

CHAPTER VIII

THE " triumvirate of savants," as Dr Seton-Watson has called them, Masaryk, the veteran philosopher, with Beneš and Štefánik, his lieutenants, who were working together for Czechoslovak freedom, and who were the signatories of the " Declaration of Independence " of October 18th, 1918, represented appropriately the three chief divisions of the country ; for Masaryk came from Moravia, Beneš from Bohemia and Štefánik from Slovakia.

Edward Beneš (pronounced Benesh) was born at Kožlany, in Bohemia, the son of a poor peasant. Like Masaryk he had a hard fight against poverty for his education, but came through triumphantly. After proving himself one of Masaryk's most able students at Prague University, and distinguishing himself also in athletics and football, he went to study in the Sorbonne at Paris, and then in the University of Dijon, earning his living by ill-paid journalistic work. In France he became much influenced by Western ideals, seeing the salvation of his country in that direction rather than in a romantic turning to Russia, the big Slav brother, for deliverance. Thus he came into line with Masaryk, whose Realist Party in politics was a call to honest independent thinking, and to action corresponding to such thought.

Beneš took the LL.D. degree of Dijon University, became Professor of Political Economy, and later Lecturer on Sociology at Prague University. In 1914 he lectured on " War," and declared it to be only justifiable if civilization were at stake.

When war broke out, he got into touch with Masaryk, as we have seen, and continued to work in Prague as long as possible, carrying on Masaryk's programme during his absence. In September 1915 he found it wiser to leave Bohemia, to avoid

being arrested for his political activities. Crossing the frontier on foot, through the frontier-forests near Cheb, he succeeded wonderfully in escaping the vigilance of the Austrian sentries, and finally reached Paris in safety. There he worked energetically as Secretary of the Czechoslovak National Council till the close of the war. In his position as the first Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, he has won a world-wide renown, to which the seal has been set by his efforts for peace as a member (and Chairman) of the Council of the League of Nations.

It is his force of character, his devotion to high ideals, and his sincere desire for the healing of the wounds of Europe that have set him in the forefront of international affairs. His aims are all towards peace in Central Europe, and towards progress in his own country and in others, for which peace is absolutely necessary. The Little Entente, linking up Roumania, Jugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, was largely his work; but he shows no exclusiveness. Already he has concluded alliances and treaties with many other countries of Europe, and he has left the door open for Hungary to join the Little Entente when she is ready.

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It was characteristic of Beneš that, although he had had so large a share in the drawing up of the Protocol of the League of Nations, and in bringing it forward, yet when it failed to find general acceptance he showed no sign of disappointment or discouragement. On the contrary, he expressed in his speeches the greatest confidence that none of the work done on the Protocol had been thrown away, but that it had been preparing the ground for the next step in the right direction.

The signing of the Locarno pact only seven months later has abundantly justified this confidence.

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Milan Štefánik rose from being a struggling Slovak student in Paris to the Secretaryship of the Astronomical Observatory. He was sent all over the world by the French Government on astronomical missions. After fighting in France, and flying to

Serbia, he worked in conjunction with Masaryk and Beneš from 1916, travelling on missions to Italy, Russia, Roumania, America, and finally visiting the Legions in Siberia. His established position in Paris made his influence very valuable in winning French sympathy and support at the outset of Masaryk's campaign.

In 1918 he became Minister of National Defence under the Czechoslovak Government. On May 4th, 1919 he was returning home to Slovakia by aeroplane when his machine fell near Bratislava, and he was killed.

It was a great loss to his nation, but he had lived long enough to give yet another striking proof of the ability of his race.

The Constitution of the Republic

In the drawing up of the Constitution by the National Assembly (1919–1920) it was not possible to have the co-operation of the German and Magyar portions of the population. The Assembly had come into being in the same week that the Armistice was signed, when Germans and Magyars were by no means ready to take part in forming the government of the new State, though they were invited to co-operate.

With due regard to these conditions, the National Assembly endeavoured to be just and impartial to all. Its members (Czechs and Slovaks) remembered their own grievances in the past, and were determined not to subject the minorities within their own borders to the disadvantages and indignities which they themselves had suffered.

The resulting Constitution is surely the most progressive of any that exists. It includes adult suffrage, proportional representation, compulsory voting, and absolutely equal rights for all citizens, whether men or women, and to whatever race, class or creed they may belong.

The National Assembly consists of two Houses, the Chamber of Deputies, with three hundred members, and the Senate, with one hundred and fifty members.

Every citizen over twenty-one who has lived three months in a polling district has a vote in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies; and every citizen over thirty is eligible as a deputy if he or she has been a Czechoslovak citizen for at least three years. The age limits for the Senate are higher. Voters must have reached twenty-six years, and no one can become a senator under the age of forty-five.

The voting is by secret ballot, and it becomes effective on a basis of proportional representation, so as to give justice to minorities. So determined is the Government to get the people to the polls that only sickness or old age can be pleaded as an excuse for not voting. The penalty is a fine or imprisonment.

There are twenty-two constituencies for the Chamber of Deputies, the smallest of which elect six members, the largest (Prague), forty-five. The electors of any given constituency do not vote for individual candidates, but for *party-lists* of candidates, drawn up by the political parties. Those who come first in order on the lists naturally stand the best chance of being elected; and thus a "safe seat" is ensured to the candidate who heads a party-list in a constituency where his party is at all popular. As the order of names on the lists is settled by the party leaders, this method seems to place too much power in their hands; but it very considerably lessens the costs to the country of an election. There is talk of altering the system before the next election, so that individual candidates can be voted for.

The President, who must be over thirty-five years of age, is elected by the National Assembly, for the period of seven years. Except in the case of the first President, the office may not be held for more than two successive periods.

The official language of the Republic is known as "Czechoslovak," and under that designation are included (1) Czech and (2) Slovak, as standardized for literary use. In Bohemia the Czech language is unified; there are practically no dialects. Czech and Slovak are really the same language, as scholars

have long recognized. They differ far less from each other than the Lowland Scottish of Burns differs from English; but whereas Scotland produced in the Scottish vernacular an abundant mediæval literature, all down the ages the literary language of Slovakia has been Czech. Great Slovak patriots, such as Kollár and Šafařík, wrote their books in Czech. Only from the nineteenth century was Slovak much used in place of Czech in books and periodicals published in Slovakia.

It was in 1844 that Michal Hodža, Ludevít Štúr, Miloslav Hurban and others began to standardize the Slovak tongue for literary use, basing this literary language chiefly on the dialect spoken in the Turčianský district. It was hoped that the Magyars would be less opposed to the use of this language than to that of Czech, but this did not prove to be the case. No doubt the introduction of a beloved vernacular into literature gave a powerful impetus to the Slovak intellect, deprived at that time of ordinary educational advantages.

Under the Republic, Slovak is everywhere on the same level as Czech, and the two appear side by side in newspapers and encyclopædias. The Czechs have a great liking for Slovak, and sing as a rule only Slovak songs. They can always understand the Slovak speech, and can easily make themselves understood by the Slovaks, as Sir Harry Brittain proved not long ago, when he experimented by taking a Czech with no special knowledge of Slovak as his only guide to the remotest corners of Slovakia. The Czech Bible, and also the Hymn-book (the famous " Tranoscius ") are used in Slovakia up to the present day, and their use has served to keep the Slovaks in touch with what was for centuries their only literary language.

When travelling in Slovakia, we noticed that the Slovaks were rather anxious to emphasize the differences between the Czech and Slovak speech. In their newly found freedom in reunion with Bohemia and Moravia, it is only natural that they should still wish carefully to preserve everything that marks their separate individuality; and this desire is fully recognized

by the Czechs, whose scholars take a full share in the work of writing books in Slovak for use in Slovak schools.

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More than 75 per cent. of the population of the Republic are nominally Roman Catholics, while the Protestants only number 7 per cent., and they are chiefly in Slovakia. Over 5 per cent. (724,000 persons) write themselves as "without confession," and of those who call themselves Roman Catholics, there are many who do not subscribe to the doctrines, nor attend the services.

Yet religion has always held a prominent place in the thoughts of the Czechoslovak people, and their history shows on almost every page how deep-rooted is their religious sense. The very oldest songs in the language are prayers to God for defence. The hymn beginning *Hospodine pomiluj ny* ("Lord, have mercy on us"), was sung in the Middle Ages, in churches and on battlefields, to a very ancient melody, which still to this day is heard in Czechoslovak churches.

We have seen how in the fifteenth century the whole nation came to be dominated by one idea, the desire to worship God as their consciences dictated, and how they forsook their country in thousands in the sixteenth century rather than be false to their highest ideal. The religious sense could not be crushed out of them by tyranny. A new translation of the Bible into Czech, known as "the Bible of Kralice," was made by a group of Czech Brethren during a lull in the severity of persecution, and was printed at their secret printing-press at Kralice in Moravia. It became the standard of the Czech language, and was a chief means of preserving it. Many of the peasants hid copies of this Bible, and remained "Czech Brethren" at heart. As late as 1755 Thomas Svoboda, a forester, was sentenced to death for reading the Bible, and even after the Edict of Toleration of 1781 the Reformed and Lutheran Churches were only allowed to have meeting-houses in secluded places, without opening on to a thoroughfare, without steeples or bells, and without anything ecclesiastical about the doors or windows.

In December 1918 the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, free at last, united under the old name, "The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren."

At the same time a great movement was taking place within the Roman Catholic Church. It had already begun before the war. Many of the Czech priests recognized the need for independence of thought and an honest facing of the problems which are exercising the minds of Christians all over the world. This resulted in the sending of a petition to the Pope, on January 23rd, 1919, of which the chief points were :

1. That the Old Slavonic liturgy should be restored, and the Bible in Czech placed in the people's hands.
2. That the lower clergy and laity should have a share in the Church government.
3. That the marriage of priests should be allowed.
4. That communion in both kinds should be given to the laity.

These points recall vividly the demands of the Hussites in the Middle Ages.

It is hardly surprising that the Pope did not see his way to grant the petition.

In January 1920, after a great meeting at Prague, a new Church was formed, known as the Czechoslovak Church, proclaiming itself Christian, national and democratic, and pledging itself to maintain the rights of freedom of conscience, and independence of thought.

This basis was found to be too vague, and a few months later the dogmatic teaching of the Serbian Church was adopted, still however allowing for freedom of conscience and free religious discussion. The future of the Czechoslovak Church seems to depend on how far it can prove that it is built up on positive Christian ideals.

Many who spoke to us on the subject of religion had clearly an earnest desire to place progress in Christian life and character before the interests of sect and dogma ; and they

showed towards all sects an attitude of friendliness and broad-mindedness which was very hopeful for the future religious life of the country.

The same spirit is making itself felt in the direction of social reform.

The Position of Women

It is not surprising that we should find a tendency throughout Czech history to accord an honourable place to women, for instead of a warlike King Arthur, with his knights as the background of history, we see Libuša, " the Lovable," a woman chosen to rule because of her wisdom and her noble character. A people with such a tradition is hardly likely to keep its women in subjection.

So we see Ludmila, " she who loves the people," renowned as one of the earliest of the Czech Christian " Saints " ; Dubravka, taking Christianity to Poland ; Dagmar, the daughter of Přemysl Otakar I, sung in Danish ballads, as a merciful Queen ; Anne, the Bohemian wife of Richard II, pleading for rebellious peasant-leaders and for the city of London : all of them holding up a high standard of womanhood, and making their mark on the history of their time.

Queen Sophia, the wife of Venceslas IV, loved the teachings of Hus, and exercised a good influence over her husband in his attitude towards the great reformer.

As we have seen, the Hussite women shared equally with their husbands in the struggles for religious liberty. It was at this period that a real sense of equality and unity, based on the teaching of the Bible, began to grow up, and it found expression later in the equality of opportunity given to women in the educational schemes of the Czech Brethren.

Komenský's views on this subject I have already quoted.

Under the Hapsburgs, girls were for a long time excluded from High Schools (*gymnasia*), and from other schools which

served as a preparation for the Universities. In spite of strong protests from women, the Government established for girls schools of a lower standard, known as *lyceums*. The Czech women were obliged to take matters into their own hands. The very first secondary school for girls in the whole of Austria was established in Prague by private effort, by the Czech poet, Eliška Krásnohorská. It is now called by her name.

At the revolution of 1918 all schools were thrown open to girls ; and all the laws passed by the National Assembly since then have placed women on an equal footing with men.

In Government departments the aim now is to appoint those best qualified to do the work, whether men or women, and at equal pay.

In actual practice women do still labour under many grave disadvantages, although in principle their equality with men is recognized. It is impossible to change all the old conditions in a short time. For instance, in some industries the agreed wages have been the same for "women, and youngsters up to eighteen years," without reference to the age and efficiency of the women-workers. The rates of pay for work done exclusively by women are still very poor. But these conditions will gradually be changed now that the principle of equality is fully recognized by law.

The eight-hours' day (48 hours a week) has passed into law since the revolution ; divorce laws have been made the same for men and women, and facilities for civil marriages have been provided.

Thus the new Republic has been bringing their laws into line with modern ideals of liberty and progress, and the position of women especially has been improved by these changes.

President Masaryk has long been in favour of equal rights for men and women, being drawn in that direction by his natural sense of justice, and having the full sympathy of his American-born wife. She translated Mill's *Subjugation of Women* into Czech as far back as 1890.

Their elder daughter, Dr Alice Masaryk, has specially interested herself in social work. A year before the war she founded a school for training girls to become social workers, and since the revolution every department of work tending to improve the conditions of women and children has had her active sympathy and help.

CHAPTER IX

THE problems which the young Republic has had to face during the first seven years of its existence have been many and great. The progress made is nothing less than marvellous, but any congratulations that may be offered are always received in a sober spirit: "So much still remains to be done!"

The Government for five years past has been carried on by means of a Coalition of the five principal parties, Agrarians, Social Democrats, National Socialists, National Democrats, and Populists (Clericals). This has been known as the "Pětka," or Committee of Five. The Premier since 1922 has been Dr Švehla (head of the Agrarian Party, and himself a farmer), who has proved an extremely able political leader. At least fourteen different parties have been represented in the House of Deputies, and thirteen in the Senate.

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As regards international relationships, Dr Beneš was able to say on April 1st, 1925: "For six whole years the Czechoslovak Republic has not had a single dispute, even of the smallest kind."

As early as 1922, a Czechoslovak loan to Austria was negotiated, concurrently with England and America. The Republic is anxious to live at peace with all its neighbours, and to help them to regain a sound economic position, recognizing the interdependence of all the States of Europe, especially of the Central States. It is this genuine desire for peace which makes the citizens proud to say: "We have no 'War Office'; only a 'Ministry of National Defence.'" Harmonious relations have been established with the Government at Berlin. Indeed,

this has proved a much easier task than to come to an understanding with the German minority in Bohemia.

The policy of the Republic has always been to recognize each section of the population as an integral and necessary part of the State ; and the Czechoslovak Constitution provides even greater safeguards for the rights of minorities than are demanded by the Minorities Treaty under the League of Nations.

The German minority in the Republic is more than 20 per cent. of the whole population, and controls 40 per cent. of the industries. From the first, the Germans comprising it were bitterly opposed to the new State, resenting their inclusion in it by the Treaty of Versailles. The German deputies elected to the National Assembly have accordingly carried out a policy of obstruction, refusing even to recognize the existence of the State. But during the past five years the German population, as a whole, has found itself in a far better position than the Germans of neighbouring States, and these favourable economic conditions have gone far to destroy their sense of resentment.

German peasants living near Svitavy in Moravia told a friend of mine that they enjoyed far greater prosperity under the Republic, and that it was only the irresponsible type of journalist who tried to stir up ill-feeling between Czechs and Germans.

In the recent elections (November 1925), Dr Rudolf Lodgmann, the leader of the German Nationalist party, failed to obtain the number of votes necessary for his election, and in consequence he has sent in his resignation to his party, declaring his intention of retiring from political life, because he regards the election results as a rejection of his policy. He writes : " I laid no stress on party : my entire concern was for the German people as a whole. I now see that this standpoint is in conflict with that of the overwhelming majority of the Germans in this country." These words, coming from the leader of the Germans in their opposition to the creation of an independent Czechoslovak State, are very significant ; they

give hope that a policy of active and helpful co-operation with the Government will soon be adopted by the German deputies. The fact that the Germans have split up into many small parties shows that they have no genuine grievance against the Government, for a real grievance would have led them to show a common front.

The Magyar minority is about 745,000 or about 5 per cent. of the population. For both these minorities, German and Magyar, an adequate number of schools is guaranteed, with instruction given in their own language. Complaints have been made that some of the Magyar and German schools have been closed down, and have been replaced by Slovak or Czech schools; but this has only occurred in cases where the Magyar schools were in Slovak districts and had been built in order to Magyarize a Slovak population, or where German schools had been provided for dependents, of Czech or Slovak origin, who now prefer instruction in their own tongue. The Germans and Magyars are now slightly better provided with schools in proportion to the number of children than are the Czechs and Slovaks.

The Germans in Slovakia had had no schools of their own since the notorious Apponyi law, making Magyar the only language. At least 130 schools have been created for them under the Czechoslovak educational system.

Although Czechoslovak is the official language, the use of their own language by minorities is protected by law, as well as provided for in schools; and speeches in Parliament in whatever language are taken down and printed, with translations.

Of course the pre-war privileges of German and Magyar minorities could not be endorsed under the Republic, and they will naturally feel for a time the loss of the artificial sense of superiority which they shared as members of the dominating races.

It is confidently expected that the signing of the Locarno Treaties will have a very beneficial effect on internal affairs in Czechoslovakia as elsewhere; especially that the large German

minority will be more ready to settle down to take its share in the constructive work of the State. Czechoslovakia was the first State to concede to Germany the most-favoured-nation clause, and also the first to request the admission of Germany into the League of Nations.

A large section of the Hungarian people has given a warm welcome to the treaties, realizing their importance to Europe as a whole.

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In Slovakia, the " People's Party," or Slovak Clericals, led by Father Hlinka and Professor Tuka, is claiming for Slovakia a greater measure of autonomy. The former is a Roman Catholic priest who made a brave stand against Magyar oppression in pre-war days. The latter now stands firmly for the Treaty of Trianon, although he signed himself a Magyar in the census of 1921.

The past history of the country is accountable for various difficulties connected with its government, and these can only be overcome in the course of time. Chief of them is the lack of education of the great masses of the people, who have been cut off, by Magyar tactics, from the rest of the world, and deprived of educational advantages.

Under these conditions, it has been very fortunate that many posts in Slovakia could be filled by educated Czechs, at least until such time as there were Slovaks trained to occupy them. At the time of the revolution it is estimated that the total number of educated and nationally conscious Slovaks was only between 750 and 1000 ; certainly under 1000.

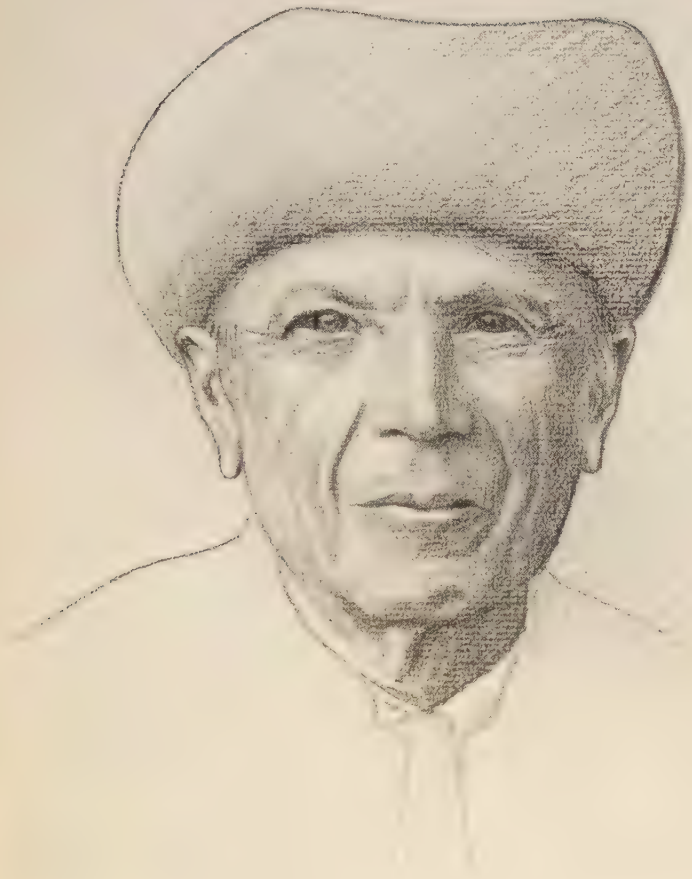
The railway and postal strike in Slovakia early in 1919 was engineered by Hungary, to prevent the union of Slovakia with Bohemia ; and the Magyars and Magyarized Slovaks who then came out on strike, in the pay of the Hungarian Government, had to be replaced immediately by volunteers from Bohemia, to save the country from isolation and chaos. The Slovaks themselves appealed to the Czechs to come to their aid. It could not reasonably be expected that the Czechs should throw

up posts offered under such circumstances as soon as the immediate need was over. Many of them had acted from motives of genuine national enthusiasm, and had given up assured positions to go to the help of Slovakia.

With the establishment of thousands of new schools, Czech teachers were an absolute necessity in Slovakia, as Hlinka himself fully recognized, for there were not nearly enough Slovaks available. And these Czechs have not had an easy time of it. There have been many places where teachers have found the schoolhouses quite uninhabitable, through neglect during the war, and where even the fittings had been removed by the peasants. These teachers have sometimes had nothing but a wooden bench to sleep upon, and have not received the warmest of welcomes otherwise. To them Slovakia has meant exile from all their accustomed surroundings; and yet the great majority of them are doing splendid work in their new sphere.

The Czechs are ready enough to admit that mistakes have been made in dealing with the Slovaks. Czechs and Slovaks differ greatly in temperament as well as in development, and have as yet hardly learnt to understand each other. In their eagerness to make up for lost time, and to provide Slovakia with a proper educational system, the Czechs have not made sufficient allowance for the conservative habits of a people who have been completely isolated from the currents of modern thought. And there have been some instances where free-thinkers amongst the Czechs have disturbed the religious feelings of Slovak peasants.

Again, Czechs occupying posts in Slovak towns have brought with them different standards of thinking and living, and have not always been tactful in their dealings with the Slovaks. Yet the great fact remains that the whole country has been so much improved during the last seven years that it is almost unrecognizable to those who knew it before the war; and continual efforts are being made to readjust conditions more favourably to the Slovaks. It is no light matter to undertake



35. A SLOVAK TYPE

a share of the government of a country which has been misgoverned for centuries. "Give us twenty years," says the Czechoslovak Government. "Do not criticize the work of seven." In twenty years the whole standard of education in Slovakia will be at a very different level. Under the Magyars, the Slovaks had only 400 elementary schools for a population of 2,000,000, and no training colleges whatever. To-day they have over 3000 elementary schools, over 100 grammar schools, over 60 secondary and special schools, besides 7 theological colleges and a university.

Dr Seton-Watson writes of this work:

"No such remarkable example of cultural progress is to be found in the entire history of modern Europe as the transformation of the school system of Slovakia during the past five years."

Yet another grievance of the Clericals was founded on the fact that the Slovak Protestants were given a share in public affairs out of all proportion to their numbers. This was merely because they were better educated, for the Slovak intelligentsia consisted largely of the children of Protestant pastors. Hlinka had himself recognized the situation in a public speech in the early days of the revolution, when he said, addressing the Protestants, "You have the cream, but we have the milk."

Some of the statements made concerning the People's Party and its claim for autonomy may be traced to the desire of the Hungarian irredentists to recover possession of Slovakia. They still make no secret of this ambition; in fact, a great deal of their propaganda is intended to win sympathy for it. The answer to their claim is simple; they had their chance with Slovakia for nine hundred years, and they missed it, as the present condition of the people shows. Slovakia has now the right to be educated in her own tongue that she may work out her own salvation, in union with the Czechs. Patience will be necessary on both sides, and confidence in each other's honest desire to find a practical solution of every problem.

Dr Pražák, the foremost living authority on Slovak history, has said :

" The more the Slovaks rise as a nation and shake off the old Magyar spirit, the more educated and critical they become, the nearer will they find themselves to the Czechs and the more fairly will they judge them."

Then, again, the religion of the Slovak peasant is now being used as a lever for recruiting the People's Party, for the Roman Catholic bishops threaten the faithful with excommunication if they join any other. Politics and religion are mixed up inextricably.

The question of the relations between Church and State was referred to in one sentence in the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence. " The Church shall be separated from the State." The matter is not so simple as it sounds on paper, for the Clerical Party in the Coalition Government, which improved its position at the last elections, does not favour separation. In any case, it would have to be a gradual process.

The Czech Roman Catholics have always maintained their veneration for Hus as the national hero, and it was with the full concurrence of the leaders of the Clerical Party that it was decided to celebrate July 6th, 1925, the five hundred and tenth anniversary of his death, as a national holiday. President Masaryk and members of the Government took part officially in the proceedings on that day. The Vatican has regarded this act as unfriendly to the Church of Rome ; and although the Government has given assurances that such was as far as possible from their intention, and that they would equally take part in the Catholic celebration of the millennium of St. Venceslas in 1928, the result was the temporary withdrawal of the Papal Nuncio from Prague. This was much to be regretted, for there is a very genuine desire on the part of the Czechoslovak Government to maintain harmonious relations with the Vatican, representing, as it does, the Roman Catholic Church to which so many of the people belong.

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A Magyar in Slovakia, speaking of the peasants in his particular village, said to me, " Religion is necessary to these people ; without it they would go to ruin."

And it is a truism that the test of the vitality of any religion lies in its influence on character, in how far it produces such virtues as honour and honesty, love and sympathy, industry and self-control.

Dr Seton-Watson writes on this head :

" The true rôle of the Church in all countries is not to plunge recklessly into party politics and to outdo its opponents in acrimonious abuse, but far rather to provide, by high standards of life and work and thought, a practical proof that Christianity is a vitalizing force, without which the State is doomed to languish and decay."

CHAPTER X

THE attractions of Czechoslovakia as a holiday centre are not yet sufficiently known in our country, though the number of English-speaking tourists increases every year. There are, of course, the big "spas," such as Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) and Marianské Lázně (Marienbad), which are cosmopolitan in character, and have long drawn visitors from every nation; but there are many places teeming with historic interest and full of natural beauty whose very names are hardly known in England. The High Tatra Mountains, the highest part of the Carpathians, have been made very accessible now, with first-class hotels more than 4000 feet above sea-level. They have a beauty all their own, whether we visit them for summer climbing or for winter sports.

In my journeys I hardly touched the many "spas," small and great, but travelled chiefly on the more unfrequented routes, for the sake of seeing the national costumes, following up the history, and studying the unspoiled natural beauties of the country.

Nowadays it is a very easy journey from London to Czechoslovakia. Prague, the capital, and the best starting-point for other parts of the country, is reached in thirty-one hours from Victoria, *via* Folkestone, Flushing and Leipzig, and the journey with first- or second-class sleeping berths, is extremely comfortable and well arranged. Travellers who have no registered luggage are not required to leave the trains at all for customs examinations at the frontiers.

Beyond Dresden the line runs through Saxon Switzerland, with beautiful views of the Labe (Elbe), and it still keeps alongside the river after the crossing of the frontier at Děčín or

Podmokly. There are two lines from the frontier to Prague, one on either bank of the Labe, running roughly parallel to each other, and if one is travelling on the right bank with registered luggage it is important to have it labelled "*via* Děčín"; otherwise it may go to Podmokly, on the other line. That is what happened once to ours, so we had to alight at Děčín, drive a mile or two across the river to Podmokly, and there wait until the customs officials arrived to release our luggage. This made us five hours later in reaching Prague. The usual train arrives at four o'clock in the afternoon.

The exchange has now stood steadily for several years at about 160 crowns to the £. The strong financial position of the Republic is due to the courageous handling of the late Dr Rašín, the Minister of Finance, who aimed at covering all deficits by taxation rather than by borrowing. No country except England has been so heavily taxed as Czechoslovakia since the war.

The charge for a bedroom in a good hotel at Prague comes to little more than four shillings per night, even including the 10 per cent. "Luxury Tax," and a small municipal tax as well.

Although Prague is so justly reckoned one of the most beautiful cities of Europe, we do not find the hotels in attractive situations, nor with beautiful views from the windows. There are plenty of them, varying in comfort, but they are arranged more for business than for pleasure. The ground floor is always taken up with a coffee-room and a restaurant, both open to the public; above, there are the bedrooms; that is all. The food as a rule is excellent, but several things seem strange to a newcomer; for instance, the popularity of caraway and poppy seeds. One or other of these is generally sprinkled on the rolls before they are baked; caraway seeds occur in the soups, the stews, and the sauerkraut, and black masses of poppy seeds are found in sweet cakes. Sometimes coarse salt is sprinkled on the rolls, instead of the seeds. Veal is very popular, prepared in many different ways; kid can sometimes be obtained; but we never once saw mutton. Pigeons

are plentiful, also geese—especially in the country districts. As for sweets, the various kinds of iced cake known as " domácí dort," or " home-made cake," are very good, and every Czech housewife knows how to make them. Similar food is obtainable in the better hotels in provincial towns. We were told never to go for a meal to a " hostinec," or village inn, especially in Slovakia. However, hunger induced us to break this rule, and we never regretted it. We used to ask for " scrambled eggs," which is literally " mixed eggs," in Czech and Slovak. Once the man came back and said that his wife did not know what we wanted them *mixed with*. So we told her, and they turned out quite well.

A favourite national dish is " knedlíky," heavy dumplings, closely resembling those eaten with boiled beef by the country-folk of East Anglia. The " knedlíky " are often served with hot roast pork and sauerkraut, and are quite palatable when well made.

Everywhere it is customary to take the principal meal in the middle of the day. Prices vary to any extent, but at some of the smaller restaurants, frequented by Prague business men, an excellent little table d'hôte luncheon is served at a cost of ten crowns (about one shilling and threepence). It includes soup, meat or entrée with vegetables, sweet, and coffee.

The recognized tip for waiters is 10 per cent. of the bill, with a trifle to be left on the table for the " boy." The waiters nearly always speak German, though the bill of fare may be only in Czech or Slovak in the provinces.

The Czech " sandwich " is quite different from ours. It can be bought in station restaurants, and in provision shops, and consists of a rather thick slice of bread on which are laid, in friendly juxtaposition, a small slice of ham, another of German sausage, a sardine, a piece of cheese, and portions of hard-boiled egg, tomato and cucumber, with perhaps an olive. It has no cover, so perhaps it cannot rightly claim the title of " sandwich," but it serves the same purpose. We wondered if it was symbolical of the mixed races of the Republic. To

a stranger it is very embarrassing to deal with, especially at afternoon tea!

In Slovakia we used to see rings of bread, threaded on a thick stick, being sold at the railway stations. The seller holds the stick up to the carriage-window, and the buyer helps himself to the top ring. The seller's closed fist acts as a stop at the lower end.

Many of the provincial railway stations provide very good meals. Once when we were not being served very well at a small hotel, we went to the railway station, just opposite, for all our food. This seemed to have a stimulating effect on the hotel management, for they immediately began to offer something better.

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Prague was certainly at her best when we first saw her, in glorious sunny spring weather, with the fruit trees which surround her all ready to burst into bloom. Even the most dark and ancient buildings, reflecting back the sunlight, forgot to frown gloomily on the passer-by, and the narrow streets, where in wet weather one may be splashed with mud from head to foot, were now pleasant shady alleys in which to wander.

The building fever was as evident as in London. "Reconstruction" is the order of the day. On every side old houses were being pulled down to make way for newer structures, and where these were already rising, barefooted women in blue, with white headkerchiefs, were mixing great masses of mortar for the workmen. The beautiful brass decorations on the harness of the cart-horses glittered in the sunshine, for horses are still far more plentiful than motors in the streets of Prague.

The ever-changing beauty of Prague's chief glory, the Hradčany Hill, with the cathedral and the castle piled above the palaces of the Malá Strana, drew our eyes continually to feast upon it.

The Cathedral of St Vitus, crowning the hill, took us back at once to "good King Wenceslas," who chose this spot

as the site of a little Romanesque Church ; but it was Charles IV in the " Golden Age," who first began to build the present cathedral. Faithful to his love of French culture and French art, he fetched Matthew of Arras from Avignon to be his architect. The greater part of the chapels in the choir is his work, as well as eight pillars in the nave.

The building was continued by Peter Parler in the next century, and went on from age to age, but still it was never completed. Wars interrupted it ; bombardment caused injuries.

In 1859, with the revival of the Czech nation, a renewed interest was taken in their beautiful buildings, and an association was formed to complete the cathedral. The main nave has since then been built, and also the two front spires. It is hoped that the work now in hand, under the architect, Kamil Hilbert, will be completed in time for the thousandth anniversary of the death of Venceslas, the original founder. In the meantime services are being held in the neighbouring Church of St George, the finest Romanesque building in Bohemia, whose white twin-towers are conspicuous in any view of the Hradčany Hill. Saint Ludmila was buried there.

Old buildings which were huddled too close to the cathedral are to be removed ; amongst them, I believe, the tumble-down inn, immortalized by the poet-novelist, Svatopluk Čech, as the resort of his hero, " Mr Brouček."

The Jewish quarter of Prague is of very early origin. It is said that Jews came there immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, if not before. The ancient synagogue (early thirteenth century) and the Jewish Town Hall are two of the most interesting buildings of old Prague. The cemetery which adjoins the synagogue is crowded with tombs inscribed in Hebrew, and marked with emblems of the tribes of Israel. It is a picturesque place in spring, when the huddled ancient stones, of varying shades of red, yellow and grey, are overhung by the ivory blossoms of the elder-trees, whose cramped and twisted stems rise from among the tombs.

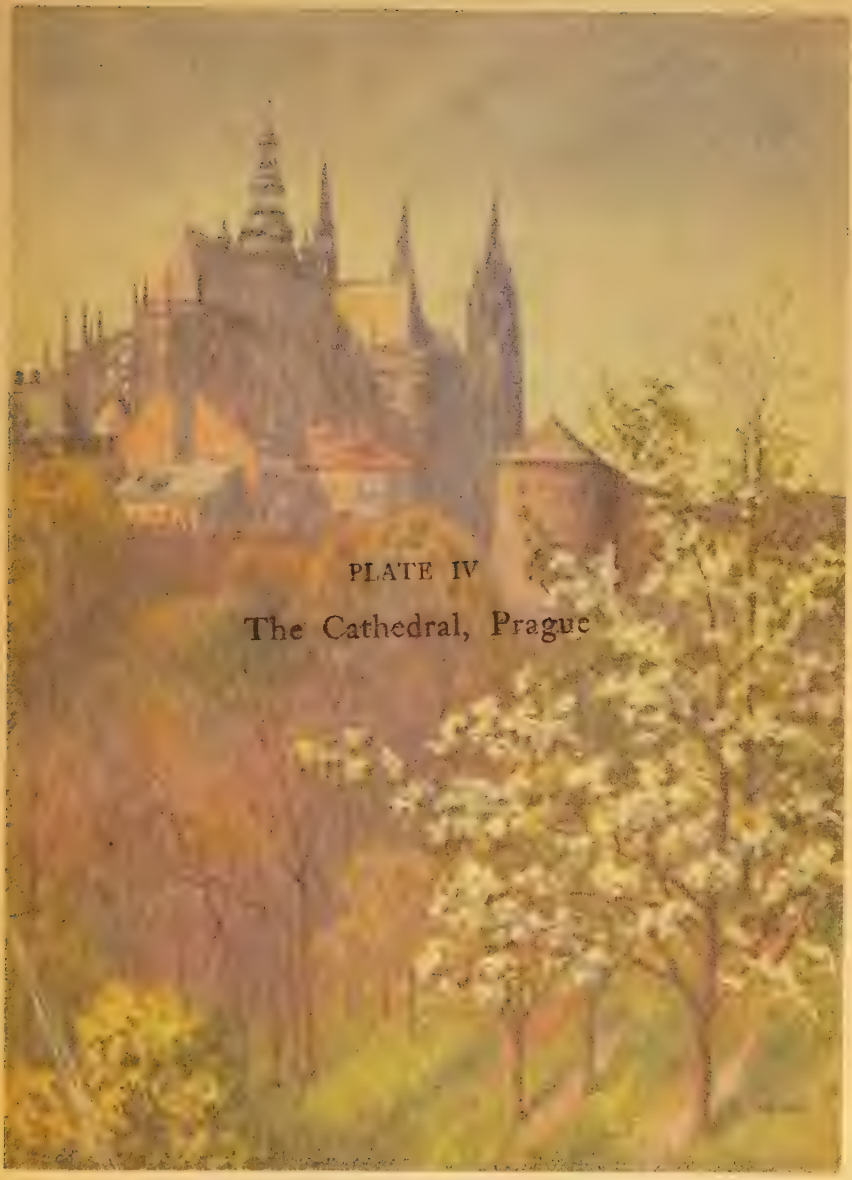

PLATE IV

The Cathedral, Prague

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The castle, now the "town-house" of the President, as well as a busy centre of Government, with its long horizontal lines of windows, row above row, representing some seven hundred rooms, makes just the right contrast with the aspiring towers and pinnacles of the cathedral. Between the two there stands the beautiful bronze statue of St George, cast by order of Charles IV in 1373, and showing exactly how the King himself must have appeared as an armoured knight on horseback.

The Jesuits were responsible for the introduction of the baroque style of architecture into Prague, as elsewhere. There is something about the exterior of the old palaces, with their caryatid figures and over-elaborated detail, which is far from unpleasing to-day. Time seems to have mellowed and softened their aggressive features, and we need not look too closely at broken pediments and florid curves. Their huge archways often lead into gardens of surpassing beauty, of which no hint is visible from the streets. Many of the palaces are now used for the foreign legations, or as Government offices. The British Legation occupies the Thun Palace, where the wonderful old furniture is still in place, including some priceless treasures of the early seventeenth century. Here also on the terraced slopes, just beneath the castle, there is a beautiful tree-shadowed garden with soft green lawns, where in early summer masses of flaming azaleas contrast with the dazzling purity of slender Madonna lilies.

The Jesuits also added the statues to the famous Bridge of Charles. Many of these will not bear examination, but the whole effect is picturesque. The noble arches of the bridge itself are a fit reminder of its founder.

Prague's many beauties are inexhaustible, and seem to increase in beauty the more they are studied. Ancient and modern vie with each other in attraction. No one should miss the Ethnographical Museum in the Kinský Gardens, for it is a splendid preparation for visiting the villages later. The best examples of the peasant's art are shown there.

At the National Theatre we can hear the music of Smetana, or see a play by Karel Čapek, Shakespeare, or Bernard Shaw. The brothers Čapek, as dramatists, have won an international reputation because all the problems that are stirring human thought come to the surface in their plays. They belong even more closely to their age than to their nation. When Karel Čapek visited Bernard Shaw in London recently, he said he felt as if he had been there before. "Perhaps you were Shakespeare?" said Shaw, with a graceful smile.

In both *The Insect Play* and *R.U.R.* Čapek points in his satirical way to the failure of materialism. In the former, mankind is seen as made up of "butterflies"—the mere pleasure-lovers; of "beetles"—the crawling money-grubbers; of "ichneumon-flies"—the proud parents; of "ants"—the slaves of a communist society; and so on: a twentieth-century version of Komenský's *Labyrinth of the World* and of the "six orders" in which nothing satisfying was found.

Čapek is frankly sceptical as to the possibility of progress through material advancement; what he really believes in is the innate goodness of the human heart. "We must help each other; that is the only way to live," is the conclusion his tramp arrives at in *The Insect Play*; and the tramp corresponds roughly to Komenský's *Pilgrim*.

The idea behind the play called *R.U.R.* came to Čapek quite suddenly, in a motor-car, when the crowd around him seemed to look like artificial beings; and he conceived the fantastic plot worked out so ably in the play.

In Prague we can study the work of Czech artists of the past, all too little known beyond the borders of their own country. Josef Mánes (1820–1871) is one of the greatest of these. His work, which includes portraits, landscapes, figure and decoration, will surely stand the test of time. During the period of the awakening of his nation, he threw off the yoke of old traditions in art, and painted with a freshness and spontaneity which proved his emancipation.

The Modern Gallery in the Stromovka Park also shows

work by many distinguished living artists; but I am only able to touch on those most closely linked to my theme.

The Moravian artist, Alphonse Mucha, is now carrying out in Prague a series of twenty immense paintings of the history of the Slavonic race. He first made his fame as a designer of posters in Paris. His present work has occupied him for fourteen years, and has been made possible by the generosity of Charles R. Crane of Chicago and New York. When completed, "The Slavic Epic" as it is called, is to be placed in a building to be specially constructed by the city of Prague to receive it—"The Hall of Slavic Liberty." Mucha includes scenes of the preaching of Milič of Kroměříž and of John Hus; in another appears Žižka the fighter. Only three remain to be completed. They are very rich in colour, and bold in design, with great attention to detail. The artist hopes when they are finished to publish a series of volumes on Slavic art, to include the best art achievements of all the Slavic nations.

There is living in Prague to-day a Czech artist whose work breathes the very spirit of Hus and Komenský. This is František Bílek, a native of South Bohemia, the land of Hus, Žižka and Chelčický. His work, though distinctly national in character, yet makes a universal appeal, for the one thought behind it is the search for Truth, the unquenchable thirst for God, which he sees as the driving force of all human endeavour.

Bílek is a versatile and prolific worker. He is only a little over fifty, yet already more than seven hundred works stand as the expression of his genius. He is a sculptor who produces colossal statues of great power and beauty; a carver in wood, who chooses his tree with a sensitive feeling for its suitability to his subject. He makes tenderly beautiful pencil studies; drawings in strong line, and in colour. But the idea behind all his work is always the same—man's longing for God. His monument to John Hus, set up at Kolín, was developed from a carving in wood, entitled "The Tree which, struck by lightning, burned for ages." Of Hus, he said to us: "I never think of

him as dead ; all that he stood for is living and working in the nation to-day, and is the ground for our highest hopes."

The thronging ideas which come to him and demand to be expressed have formed themselves into several series which he calls " Cycles." One of these is known as " Cesta " or " The Journey." It comprises a number of sculptures, beginning with one called " Thirst," a figure sunk to the ground, but with head lifted, parched lips parted, and longing eyes gazing upwards in agonized desire ;—" as the hart panteth after the water-brooks." The next in the series is " The Fall " ; and so " The Journey " proceeds, along the path of the search for truth, through Old Testament history, to the Child who brings hope, till at last it ends with the group of the Master and the disciples before the outer court of the Temple, that Court which is great enough to receive and unite all.

Another cycle is known as " Pater Noster." The underlying idea is, as the artist himself put it, that " all the senses have to learn to pray." One of the most striking of this series represents a sculptor in his studio, kneeling humbly before a large figure of Jesus Christ on the Cross, on which he has been working. His hands have dropped to his sides, and his head is bowed, for a vision of the Christ has come to him, revealing to him that the measures of his work are all too small. Thus the artist expresses symbolically the infinitude of the divine ideal. " Our work is just as great as we are ourselves," he said in his low, even voice, as he showed this drawing ; " it is great in proportion to our sense of God."

One of the groups which we saw in the studio in Prague represents an old man stooping with one arm round the shoulders of a young boy, who gazes where the old man points with eyes full of awe and awakening wonder. It is Wisdom revealing to the inexperience of youth that life is a struggle, but that victory rests with him who loves.

This group of two colossal figures is carved out of a single piece of oak. The artist's wife gave a pleasant picture of her husband at work on it in the orchard of their country house at

Chýnov, with the lambs playing close round him in perfect fearlessness.

Bílek has shown his sense of the significance of Czech history in his design for a great national monument. It represents the altar of the nation, and flames leaping upwards, where the greatest offerings are laid. The chief figures of Czech history follow each other across the arena, and the culminating point of the nation's greatness is reached in Hus and his followers. The Nation itself is shown as a single figure, sacrificing itself for the sake of the glory that endures.

He returns again and again to the names most dear to the hearts of the Czechs, Štítný, Hus, Žižka, Chelčický, Komenský.

His monument to Komenský bears the words, "To the memory of a brother who preserved the good wine to the end."

In his single-minded devotion to the highest aims, and in the "bigness" of his work, Bílek may be compared to an artist of an older generation, George Frederick Watts. His unaffected simplicity and sincerity make him perfectly willing to speak of those things which move him most. He says: "The success of our work is conditioned by the success of our life: all that pertains to our life also pertains to our work. We must therefore be good, strong and beautiful." And again: "What for Nietzsche was superman is for me only man." Expressing in his art his love of God, of Christ, of truth, he is always pointing to the path man must take if he is to become really man; always pointing to the unconquerable ideal.

He spoke to us of his great friendship with Otakar Březina the poet, and how by independent paths they had reached the same road. "What Březina would say in verse, I would say in wood and stone."

Březina comes also from South Bohemia, that region so rich in great men; he is one of the most inspired of Czech poets. His works do not lend themselves readily to translation, but they have been made accessible to English readers by Mr Paul Selver, who has opened out for us so much Czech literature.

I would like to quote here two of his translations, as examples of the work of the modern Czech poet, though *two* examples, and those of necessity very brief, can give little idea of the beauty, scope and variety of this branch of Czech art.

ETERNAL UNREST. By Antonín Sova

"Spirited words had soaring zest,
The puny heart was frail and shy . . .
We can soar to each topmost crest,
Or linger here. The heart sobbed: Try! . . .
And when I made endless heights my quest
The heart wailed here below despairingly . . .
And when with the heart I sank to rest,
The eagle's eyrie stirred me snaringly."

Lyrics of Love and Life (1907).

SONG. By Otakar Theer

"Sorrow, like a mighty bird
Weighs upon my heart, its lair,
And it moves not. Dead the stare
From its eye that blood has blurred.

'Bird, arise! O, leave me! Fly!
Thou art stifling me! I faint!'
But, as solace for my plaint,
Croakingly it makes reply:

Only where the radiant springs
Quaff their azure brink, I flee.
Know that I shall stifle thee
If thou canst not get thee wings."

In Spite of All (1916).

While in Prague we paid two delightful visits to Madame Bráfová, the granddaughter of Palacký. The first visit was to Palacký House, in Palacký Street, Prague, where the gentle dignified lady, who still makes her home there, showed us many memorials of her grandfather. There was a fine portrait of him by Josef Mánes, and one of his wife, and of other members of the family by artists of lesser fame. There were pictures of Palacký when he was a young man, tall and strikingly handsome; also a brilliant pen-drawing of Dr Rieger (Palacký's

son-in-law, and father of our hostess), by Max Švabinský. Dr Rieger has his place in the Czech Pantheon of famous men. He was one of the patriots who took a prominent part in the difficult period at the middle of the nineteenth century; a member of the Austrian Parliament, whose eloquent speeches were a great inspiration and encouragement to his people. His favourite phrase was: "We won't give in," and this was often quoted by Masaryk during the later struggles.

The writing-table at which Palacký wrote his famous history still stands in the window where he used to sit.

Our second visit was to Madame Bráfová's country house, at Roztoky, an hour by train from Prague. The village is famous for its cherry trees, which line the road above the river in serried rows. Their fairylike boughs, gleaming in virginal whiteness against the blue sky, give out a message which calls hundreds from the streets of Prague to hear it. The vision of snowy petals was repeated in Madame Bráfová's garden; and indoors she had beauty of another kind to show us; treasured Czech embroideries, snowy white, with delicate lines of blue beads. We met there a Palacký of the present generation, a great-nephew of the historian.

One soon learns to love Prague, and to feel at home in those streets where the whole history of the nation can be traced out. It makes an interesting study to begin at Vyšehrad with Libuša, and to follow on with the Hradčany Hill and its memorials of St Ludmila and her grandson, St Venceslas; then through the centuries, to the four great fortification towers built under Přemysl Otakar II; then, to the cathedral, the Charles Bridge, the Carolinum, and everything that recalls the great Emperor; to the site of the Bethlehem Chapel where Hus preached, to the Týn Church of the Hussites, finished by George of Poděbrad; to the Powder Tower of Vladislav, to the Belvedere of Ferdinand, and the palaces and churches of the Jesuits, finishing at last with the great "Národní Divadlo," built by the awakening Czech nation in the nineteenth century.

Sometimes the quiet corners of old Prague seem to have more to say to us than the famous buildings. There is a little restaurant, high up above the city, with a charm which is all its own. It is entered from the Malá Strana or Petit-Côté, under the Hradčany Hill, and the house leans, as it were, against the side of the hill. From a narrow street we enter a passage even narrower. On one side is a house on which is painted a huge fresco of St Methodius with his palette and brushes. Under it is written: "The Artist's House" and "St Methodius, pray for us." Above, lest the artist should be too sanguine, is the motto, "Do what you will, you will not please everybody."

At the end is a doorway over which is a beautiful little sculptured relief in stone, showing our Lord at the well with the woman of Samaria, and the words: "DEUS EST SPIRITUS." The name of the house is written below, Zlatá Studně—"The Golden Well."

I came here once on the hottest of hot days. The shops were all shut for the dinner-hour, and the restaurants exuded hot steam. I wondered where I should go for coolness and quiet. Then I remembered the Golden Well.

Through a cool dark archway I entered a courtyard with an outside staircase going up to each floor. At the fourth floor I came to a little garden on the steep slope of the hill, with hens and chickens running about under apple trees; at the fifth floor there was the Golden Well in a bower of Virginia creeper and vine leaves; at the sixth, there were seats in the shade of oleander trees and a glorious view of Prague, the river, the bridges, the myriad towers. I ordered an omelette from a small girl with flaxen plaits. We were just under the wall of the castle garden, and the gardeners were hanging themselves like bent pins over the top of the high wall, to reach the refreshment which the diminutive waitress was handing up.

It was cool at last up here. Pigeons with azure breasts and rosy wings were flying in and out of the oleander trees, or

settling amongst the magnolia blossoms; alighting even on the tables to pick up crumbs. In Moscow, in the old days, so I have been told, they would fly in at the windows and eat the butter off the breakfast tables, and not even smacking would induce them to go. It was a penal offence to injure one of these "symbols of the Holy Spirit," and they seemed to know it.

My little waitress was learning English, and she brought her lesson-book to have a few words read to her when she had served my wants. I was glad I had come to the Golden Well, with its high air, its wide view, and its little sculpture over the door.

It is unexpected corners like these that help to make Prague so lovable.

"Sokol"

In the streets of Prague, and in the country places, one may often notice a metal badge, with the inscription, "Na stráž!" (On Guard!), worn either by a man, a woman, or a child. It is the badge of the "Sokols," or "Falcons," the movement which has played such an important part in the national revival. It now has over six hundred thousand members of both sexes, and of all ages from six to sixty. The picturesque uniform of grey and scarlet, with a falcon's feather in the men's caps, enlivens the streets, especially on state occasions.

The movement was founded in 1862 by Dr Miroslav Tyrš, nominally as a society for gymnastic training, but a much deeper motive underlay its origin. It was at a time when all outlet for national aspiration seemed to be closed by the Hapsburg policy of repression. Dr Tyrš saw a great opportunity for training the people, through association in physical exercises and sports, in such desirable qualities as self-control, discipline, mutual co-operation, unselfishness, alertness; and so making them better morally as well as physically. The sign of the falcon was chosen to typify their aspirations.

The first Sokol was founded with seventy-five members, and

from that time for twenty-two years Dr Tyrš worked untiringly in the service of the movement, which grew rapidly. Every member is obliged to give three hours a week to physical exercises. That is the only definite rule, but in actual practice the movement is found to lead to temperance, non-smoking and moderation generally, and therefore the central aim has certainly become one of service to the general welfare.

Almost at the outset Tyrš was joined by Jindřich Fügner, also a man of high moral character, who had started in his father's grocery business, but had not found there sufficient scope for his aims. So he went abroad and made his own way, gaining a thorough education as well as a fortune, and returning after ten years to realize for the first time that he was a Czech, and not a German. Then he threw himself wholeheartedly into the Sokol movement, and devoted to it the fortune he had earned.

Both leaders upheld a very high standard of character as the ideal to be reached. When war with Prussia broke out in 1866 Dr Tyrš began to form a voluntary corps of Sokols, and offered to defend the passes leading from Prussia and Saxony into Bohemia, but the offer was refused, and for a time efforts were made by the authorities at Vienna to suppress the whole movement. The perseverance of the Czechs finally gained the day, and progress was then very rapid; women were incorporated in the organization, and it soon spread to the other Slavonic countries. Indeed, wherever a large number of Czechoslovaks have settled, a Sokol society has sprung up. There are many such in the United States, as well as in France and Germany—and in London also.

During the Great War the Bohemian Sokols, and the inter-Slavonic Federation of Sokols, with its centre at Prague, were both dissolved by the Austrian Minister of the Interior, on November 24th, 1915.

Nowadays one of the great sights of Prague is a Sokol display, when, on the vast exercise grounds, many thousands of men and women march and drill in splendid discipline,

to the sound of music, looking like moving flower-beds, or like an embroidered pattern which is ever changing.

New headquarters have lately been established in one of the old palaces of Prague, altered for the purpose, and renamed, "Tyrš House."

A recent manifesto expresses their aims in these words: "We wish to train our members so that they may reflect on their view of life, their religion, and their efforts towards a high moral standard, and act according to the results of their reflections. Thus, free of all hatred, and not knowing in our midst any political, class, religious or party conflicts, we advance like one single powerful body, united by true brotherhood, and work with good spirit on the tasks allotted to us in life."

From the very beginning the Sokols have rejected the "Might is Right" theory; and the doctrine of "the survival of the fittest" has been adopted by them only with the higher interpretation, "We will eliminate the weak by helping them to become strong."

Their motto is, "Ni Zisk ni Slávu" ("Neither Gain nor Glory").

A Visit to Lány

Through the kind offices of the Secretary of the Czech Society, I had received a promise from President Masaryk that he would give me a short sitting while I was in Prague, if he found he could spare the time. So an appointment was made for me to lunch at Lány, the President's country home.

Lány is an old castle, but it has been entirely modernized internally, and the wealth of antiques which nearly every castle contains has been removed.

I was very anxious that the President should talk while he sat, and yet when he did talk I was so much interested that I could hardly get on with my work. At first he was silent, and his face assumed the grave, almost stern, expression which it takes in repose. When he speaks, it is the kindness in his

eyes which is most noticeable. I thought to myself, " Does he want this quiet hour for meditating on affairs of state ? " But presently I plucked up courage, and began to ask him questions. He advised me what to read in studying the history of his nation, and recommended especially the books of Ernest Denis, the French historian, who did so much to bring about a better understanding of the Czechoslovak position in Europe, and who founded the School of Slavonic Studies in Paris. The President referred to the many difficulties that beset a young state, but he spoke with the hopefulness and confidence of one who had already overcome difficulties which had seemed insuperable—" He always gave me the impression of being in the battle and still above it," says an American woman-writer, and no words could express it better. Intent on what he was saying, he seized his moustaches and twisted the ends up towards his ears, giving his face an entirely different character. I heard afterwards that this was a favourite trick of his, and that as a sitter he was the despair of all the artists.

The time slipped away all too quickly. When it was over Miss Alice Masaryk took me to walk in the park. It was glorious spring sunshine, and the young leaf-buds were just beginning to burst. As we walked, " Dr Alice " (she is Doctor of Philosophy) asked about the scope and intention of my proposed book, and when she heard that I meant to take at least two years over it, learning a little of the language, studying the literature, painting and travelling, she said, " I like the sound of this book, I think it is going to be an *honest* book, and I wish it all success."

The sketch of the President reproduced in this book is not the actual drawing made at Lány. It is based partly on my own sketches, and also partly on a photograph which he gave me when I was there.

On the way back to Prague in the President's car, the famous site of the " White Mountain " battle was pointed out to me.

The Museum of the Legion

I saw it again later when a Czech friend took me to see the Museum of the Czechoslovak Legion, where memorials of the famous retreat are gathered. They were then appropriately housed on the site of the battle, in a building known from its shape as Hvězda, or the Star. It was beneath the walls of the "Star" Park that the Moravians under Count Šlik made such a brave last stand on that fateful day. "Hvězda" was built about 1560 by Ferdinand, the son of Ferdinand I, in the Italian Renaissance style, but not occupied after 1620. The Austrians used it as a powder-magazine.

There was a fine collection of pictures illustrating the life of the Legion in many lands, but what struck me most was the way in which the history of the nation had been recorded by these soldiers, on their banners, and in bold paintings on the sides of railway trucks, all showing strong decorative feeling, and a very high standard of artistic excellence. The great wooden railway truck-sides had been brought all the way from Siberia.

The subjects illustrated began with Čech on Mount Říp; then there was Libuša, prophesying as she gazes at Prague: "Oh, my town, the glory shall be thine; thou shalt trample down with thy feet the perfidious stranger." And there was Kozina, the Chod hero, inviting the tyrant Laminger to meet him before the judgment-seat of God. Another design showed "The Blacksmith of Lešetín," "to whom a strong tree was but a child's toy," the hero of a poem by Svatopluk Čech which the Austrian Government had suppressed. One banner bore the Sokol motto: "Neither Gain nor Glory." And many another subject dear to the heart of the nation was there, all witnessing to the strength of the tide of feeling which the Dual Monarchy had tried to stem.

These memorials also reveal the kind of life led by the Legion in Siberia. It was like a little nation in itself, with lectures, theatres, music, art and every kind of activity going

on. The Bolsheviks in vain, by treachery and by force of arms, endeavoured to exterminate the Legion ; whenever an engagement occurred the Czechoslovaks were victorious. They reported that the Bolsheviks were only formidable when facing disorganized soldiers, or defenceless inhabitants, but were easily beaten by regular and well-organized troops. The Legion had also to fight the many thousands of Austrian and German prisoners from Siberian camps who were armed by the Bolsheviks, and given their liberty.

The Museum is now removed to Troja Castle, which stands in a beautiful garden just outside Prague.

CHAPTER XI

THERE are several places of special interest which can easily be visited from Prague in the day, either by train or by car.

The hill of Říp, near Roudnice, on the river Labe (Elbe), is linked up with the legendary history of the earliest national hero. I was taken there by a Czech friend who was determined that my feet should stand on the spot where Čech, the ancestor, stood when first he viewed the land.

Roudnice is only one hour from Prague. It lies on a hill-slope above the river, which flows serenely through the level plain. Rows of Lombardy poplars fringe the banks on the farther side from the town; distant blue hills rise along the north-western horizon. These are the Středohoří, "Middle Mountains," and more distant still, in the same direction, are the "Ore Mountains," which separate Bohemia from Germany.

First we visited the castle, a fine building, in the middle of the little town, dating from 1650, and owned since the seventeenth century by the Lobkovic family. The present owner, Dr Max Lobkovic, is now the Secretary of the Czechoslovak Legation in London. There are pictures here from the sixteenth century; also a very large and valuable library, and an armoury. The librarian, Dr Brožek, kindly showed us over. He had been tutor to the present generation of the family, and he pointed out their portraits at different ages with great pride, dwelling on their varied gifts. In the library he knew exactly where to look for any given book amongst the hundred thousand volumes, and he brought out the most rare and beautiful of them for us to see. These included a Gutenberg Bible of 1462,

in two volumes; a Plato in manuscript; and a beautifully illuminated version of one of Aristotle's works on "Animals."

Plate V shows the view from the window of one of the galleries.

It was to the Castle of Roudnice that Charles IV in 1350 sent Rienzi, the "Tribune," to be "taught and improved." He remained here a whole year, until the papal legate bore him off to Avignon as a heretic.

We took a carriage, to drive out to the Říp, which can very soon be seen, rising conspicuously from the level land—an isolated hill, 1325 feet high, covered thickly with trees and vegetation except at the top. Many beautiful wild flowers grow beside the winding path which leads to the summit, where stands the little white Romanesque Church of St George. This is one of the oldest churches in Bohemia, if not *the* oldest. The little red-roofed rotunda building known as the "Chapel of the Holy Cross," in Karolina Světlá Street, Prague, and two others, similar in character, may possibly be older. The Říp Church has a round tower attached to the circular main building (Plate XXXI).

Standing here, we can imagine how the country must have appeared, spread out beneath the gaze of the very first "Czech" and his followers—fertile, watered by the river, but uncultivated and uninhabited.

. . . . . .

The most remarkable feudal castle in Bohemia is the one built by Charles IV, about twenty miles south of Prague, and called by him, "Karlův Týn," *i.e.* Charles's Castle. It was begun in 1348 by the French architect, Matthew of Arras, to whom Charles had already entrusted the building of Prague Cathedral. Intended as a safe keeping-place for the State archives, it had to be in an inaccessible position, and was very strongly built, and fortified. Originally a deep ravine had to be crossed before the first gate could be reached, but the ground was levelled here in 1590.

To defend the castle and to guard the treasures Charles

PLATE V

Roudnice and the River Labe, Bohemia

in two volumes; a Plato in manuscript; and a beautifully illuminated version of one of Aristotle's works on "Animals."

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To defend the castle and to guard the treasures Charles

appointed a Burgrave, assisted by twenty-two vassal knights and twenty vassal peasants. Ten men had always to be on guard night and day. Once every hour they were required to cry aloud from the walls : " Keep far from the castle ! Keep away from the castle to avoid danger of death ! "

The great tower, in which is the Chapel of the Holy Cross, is 121 feet high and has walls 15 feet thick.

In 1422 the Hussites tried for twenty-four weeks to capture the castle, but all their efforts were in vain.

The richness of the interior of the five chapels, as Charles left them, was unequalled by anything that then existed. Some of the original frescoes are still to be seen on the walls, including portraits of Charles and his Queen. The Chapel of the Holy Cross, where the priceless treasures were kept, was closed by means of four strong iron doors, with nine locks, and ten bolts. The walls are all inlaid with precious stones, amethysts, yellow amber, white and yellow quartz, including originally even diamonds. None but the archbishops, the bishops, and the governor of the castle were allowed to pass beyond a gilded iron grille which shut off the high altar in which the treasures were hid. Round the walls there were originally one hundred and thirty-two pictures of saints ; one hundred and twenty-six of these are still in place. The shields and other emblems of the saints were all carried out in pure gold and silver. Sigismund, the son of Charles, had the gold and silver melted down, and removed many precious stones and treasures, in order to pay the mercenary troops who fought for him against the Hussites.

The paintings are the work of Theodoric of Prague, court-painter to Charles IV, and head of the celebrated Guild of Prague Painters, founded by the King.

Charles spent much time in this castle, enjoying the quiet of forest and mountain, and the opportunities for worship and meditation which it afforded in the intervals of his busy life. Quaint memorials of him are shown—a fragment of his purple velvet robe, and a roughly hewn wooden prie-Dieu and chair,

which he is said to have made himself. Another relic is the bedstead of St Ludmila, the grandmother of good King Wenceslas.

The office of Burgrave of Karlův Týn became later a very important one. During the period of the Hussite wars, when there was no king in the country, the castle fell into the hands of the Bohemian Estates. After that, it became the custom to appoint *two* Burgraves, one from the Lords and the other from the Knights, and they had to swear fealty to the Estates as well as to the King. The office was abolished after the battle of Bílá Hora, and the domain was given as a dower to the Queen of Bohemia. The insignia and relics were then removed to the cathedral at Prague.

The castle was repaired by Ferdinand I and Rudolph II, when, unfortunately, the frescoes of Charles IV were much damaged by ignorant restorers. It was again restored at the close of the nineteenth century; and although it looks rather too much as if it had been built yesterday, it still remains a noble building in a noble situation.

The Castle of Křivoklát, also within easy reach of Prague, is even older than Karlův Týn, and externally is quite as beautiful. It was already being restored in 1110, by Prince Vladislav I. Charles IV had it magnificently decorated for his wife, Blanche de Valois.

. . . . . .

The old town of Kutná Hora ("The Miners' Hill"), which figures so largely in Czech history, can also be visited from Prague in the day. It was renowned in the Middle Ages for its silver mines, becoming on that account second only in importance to Prague. Venceslas II in the thirteenth century sent for Italians to open a mint there, and to instruct his people in the art of coinage. The old Gothic building where the coins were struck is still known as Vlašský Dvůr, "The Italian Court" (see *Frontispiece*); and its medley of traceried windows, towers and archways, is still very attractive, in spite of restoration. The cool dark shadows of heavy chestnut trees in

the centre of the courtyard, almost concealing a large stone fountain, makes this a pleasant resting-place on a hot day.

The Church of St Barbara, begun between 1380 and 1420, is the chief treasure of Kutná Hora, a glorious piece of Gothic, though only a fragment. It stands well up above the town, and is approached by a road with baroque statues rising from its buttressed walls, in imitation, so they say, of the Charles Bridge at Prague. The church consists of a grand choir, with eight radiating chapels, and part of a nave of five aisles. Below the beautiful pinnacles and flying buttresses of the choir, the "Miners' Hill" slopes steeply down to a stream. There are delightful bits of fifteenth-century Gothic to be met with in the town itself; a large stone fountain in one of the squares, and more than one oriel window, supported by a massive stone shaft.

Such a window occurs in "Kamenný Dům" (The Stone House), which has also a gable beautifully decorated with horsemen and other figures in low relief. The Town Museum is now housed there, and is full of reminiscences of the rough days of the miners. Their dress, their customs, and the methods of their craft can all be studied.

In the nave of the Church of St Barbara there is a statue, carved in wood and coloured, representing a miner with his lamp. It was placed there about 1700. On the west wall of one of the chapels there is a large fresco-painting of the coat-of-arms of this "royal mining town," showing a miner and a minter as the "supporters," one on either side. The date of this is 1493. A large W, held by the figures, stands for the King's monogram. Both men wear very curious dresses, decorated with patterns which may be intended to represent early Czech embroidery, and with hoods over their heads, all in one piece with the dress.

I was taken to see everything by a resident in the town, to whom I had been given an introduction. Before the war he was the head of a prominent firm of organ-builders, but the war put a stop to all work of this kind, and his business had

been ruined. He and his family were living in rooms, in a very quiet way; but this did not prevent them from showing me the kindest hospitality.

Kutná Hora was the stronghold of Roman Catholicism at the beginning of the Hussite wars, and the fierce miners persecuted the followers of Hus with very great cruelty. The charcoal-burners of the neighbourhood and many of the workmen and peasants were Hussites. Žižka captured the town from the forces of Sigismund in 1422, and from that date it remained strongly Protestant for over two centuries. After the battle of Bílá Hora in 1620, Ferdinand, in his resolve to crush out Protestantism, ignored the special privileges which had been granted to the miners for centuries, quartering soldiers upon them, and persecuting them in other ways, until he drove them away, thus destroying the mining industry, and leaving much of the town a desert. By 1626 not a single Protestant remained.

CHAPTER XII

NO one can travel far in Czechoslovakia without seeing that this is a country where the Land question must hold an important place. The visitor from England is especially struck by the way in which every available scrap of land is fully cultivated. Another noticeable point is that the fields are divided into long narrow strips, and as every strip carries a different crop from the one next to it, the whole effect is that of a many-coloured striped carpet, spread out over the whole land, not only in the level parts, but folded over all the lower hills as well, and tucked down well into the hollows.

The stripes of the carpet are very often only a few feet wide, and may be half a mile long. This division of the land has arisen through the custom of sharing it out amongst the various members of a family. For the sake of fairness, each was given a strip of every variety of soil and situation, and through successive generations the strips have become narrower and narrower. One peasant may have inherited ten, twenty, fifty, or even sometimes a hundred scattered strips. In Moravia efforts have long been made to remedy this, by a reapportioning of the land so that all the strips belonging to one owner lie as near to each other as possible. This process, known as "commassation," is encouraged by the new land reform laws. It results in great saving of time and labour to the peasant, and also in saving of land, for narrow strips involve waste of land in boundary furrows.

Intensive culture is carried on to such an extent that in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia there is no unproductive land. Nearly half of the total area of Czechoslovakia is arable land, nearly one-third is forest, and nearly one-fifth is pasture.

The very small remainder, about four per cent., is occupied by roads, buildings, etc. About forty per cent. of the entire population is engaged in agriculture.

Before the war the great mass of the land belonged to large proprietors, and many of the peasants were either tenants dependent on the goodwill of their landlords, or else season workers taken on only during the busy times of the year. The peasants who did possess land of their own had often too little to afford them a livelihood. In Slovakia the rich plains and valleys were almost entirely in the hands of the Magyars, and the Slovaks lived chiefly in the hilly districts where it was very difficult to wrest a living from the barren soil.

The Great War changed the old order. The cultivators of the soil, previously without political power, began to demand recognition as a vital part of the nation. In point of numbers they were the most powerful class in all the countries of eastern Europe, and everywhere they demanded legislation to enable them to acquire land. Roumania, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland and Lithuania all passed laws with a view to satisfying the land-hunger of the peasant class.

In Czechoslovakia there was a double motive in the desire for land reform ; not only the bettering of the condition of the peasants, but also the righting of a great historic wrong. Lands confiscated after the battle of the White Mountain had passed into alien hands, religious persecution and oppression had driven many thousands of Czechs into exile from their own country, and the memory of this terrible time had never been wiped out. Now after three hundred years there seemed the opportunity of restoring the lands to the race which had previously held them, not by confiscation but by purchase at a fair price.

In actual practice the Land Reform Acts have resulted in benefiting Germans and Magyars of the agricultural class as much as Czechs and Slovaks, and this is as it should be, for all citizens of Czechoslovakia are equal before the law.

It is safe to say that there has been no opposition to and reform, as such, in Czechoslovakia. Even the old Austrian Government had recognized the need of a readjustment of distribution, but it feared to make a beginning.

The laws providing for expropriation of the big estates were already foreshadowed in the Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence, issued from Washington on October 18th, 1918: "The largest estates will be redeemed for home colonization."

The Republic came into being on October 28th, 1918; and the National Assembly met in Prague on November 14th.

The land question early came up for consideration, for feeling in the country was strong. And in December 1918 the Hungarians made the matter more urgent by suddenly promising the Slovaks the immediate division and distribution of the large estates.

The need for prompt action was therefore recognized by all classes and all political parties. The difficulty has been to reconcile the different views as to how the reforms should be carried out. For example, the Agrarians were in favour of private ownership; the Socialists urged ownership by the community and by co-operative groups, and that the land should be taken without compensation. The Agrarians would have allowed the landowner to retain 1000 hectares of land, the Socialists, only 50 (a hectare = $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres).

In the law actually passed on April 16th, 1919 the owner is debarred from alienating, leasing, mortgaging or dividing his land without the consent of the authorities; and when called upon he must surrender it to the Government. He may keep 150 hectares of arable land, or 250 hectares of land of various kinds. Under special circumstances he may be allowed to keep up to 500 hectares, but never more.

A "Land Office" was formed in October 1919 to carry the reforms into effect.

The compensation to be paid for the land taken was decided by a law passed in April 1920. It is based on the average price paid for land in the open market during the years 1913–1915.

The "Law of Allotment," following on the "Law of Expropriation," aims broadly at allotting the expropriated land in farms, of sufficient size to support a family, and not too large to be cultivated by the family without regular outside help. Communities and associations are also eligible to share in the redistribution. By June 1925 over 1,000,000 acres of land had been distributed amongst 419,791 families, with a total membership of nearly 924,000 persons. This means that one in every fifteen of the whole population is benefiting directly from the land reform.

Considering the immense difficulties involved in readjusting fairly the ownership of land, it is not surprising if some mistakes have been made and some opposition aroused.

Changes are never pleasant to those who have inherited exceptional privileges under the old order of things; but if the result of the land reforms is to increase the number of industrious and contented peasant proprietors, who will be a source of strength to the State, then even those who seem to suffer from the changes will benefit in the long run by the increased stability.

CHAPTER XIII

OUR first stay in Slovakia was at Bratislava, the capital. The railway from Prague passes through Brno, and Slovakia is entered where the line crosses the river Morava, the boundary, for a distance of twenty-five miles, between Moravia and Slovakia.

The difference in the climate, and in the character of the vegetation at Bratislava is very marked. Palms and orange-trees grow in the gardens, and everything was much more forward than in Prague.

To understand conditions in Slovakia it is necessary to get a rough general idea of its geography. The great curve of the Carpathians sweeps round on the north, an enclosing barrier, nearly four hundred miles long, reaching its greatest height in the centre at High Tatra. Many rivers rise in these mountains, making their way between lesser mountain ranges, and running mainly southwards, to join the Danube in its eastward course to the Black Sea. The Váh, the largest of them, flows westwards for many miles before turning south-west near Žilina.

With all these valleys opening towards Hungary, it was easy for the Magyars to penetrate the country. They settled chiefly in the fertile plains of the Danube, leaving the more barren hill country to the Slovaks, and it is in these low regions that a large proportion of the Magyar minority is now found.

Although the irredentists of Hungary, belonging to the wealthy classes, make loud complaints of the hardships of their minorities, these Magyar farmers along the banks of the Danube are very contented with their lot. A deputation of 2500 of them, who were visiting the Agricultural Exhibition at Prague last May (1925), marched to the castle on purpose to

express their loyalty, with enthusiastic cries, in Magyar, of " Long live Masaryk; long live the Republic."

Bratislava lies on the Danube, just where the White Carpathians drop suddenly into the plain, at the south-west end of the great curve. The saying goes that it is " at the end of the Carpathians and the beginning of the Alps," for an outlying spur of the northernmost Alps can be seen from the Castle Hill on a clear day.

As the capital of Slovakia under the Republic, it has more than recovered the important position it held in the sixteenth century as capital of Hungary, and, also in later times, when the castle was still a royal residence.

It was in this castle that Maria Theresa, in 1741, on the eve of war with Frederick the Great, received the deputation of the Hungarian Estates. The cry of the Magyar nobles, " Vitam et sanguinem pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa ! " is well known, but we are not usually told that the loyalty of the nobles had been purchased after keen bargaining, by the royal promise of immunity from taxation in the future. In Hungary at that time every one was " noble " who had a vote, and from henceforth for more than a century the population was divided into two distinct classes, one of which possessed *all* the political rights, and the other paid *all* the taxes !

The castle is not beautiful; it was burned down in 1811, and since then its gaunt rectangular shape, with a tower at each corner, has earned for it the name of the " inverted bedstead."

Bratislava was the one place in Czechoslovakia where we found it better to write beforehand to engage rooms, for the hotels always seem to be full. Probably it is the business men and commercial travellers who fill them in this busy and growing trading centre. Huge sums have been spent in making Bratislava a really valuable port, the most flourishing port on the Danube, with access to the Black Sea and the East. Ships can now come right up from the Black Sea; a deep channel is kept open by constant dredging. The trade is already ten times as great as it was before the war, and is increasing rapidly.

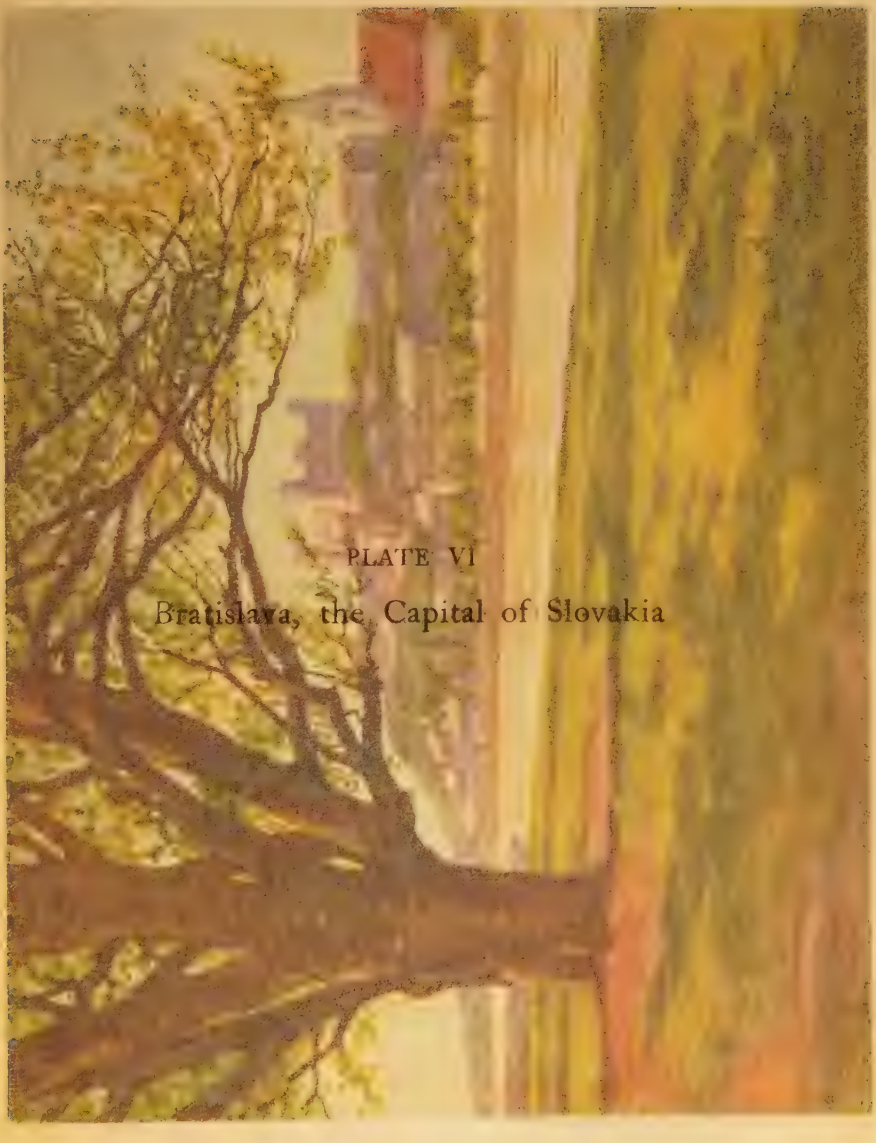

PLATE VI

Bratislava, the Capital of Slovakia

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It is the most expensive place we came across; and it is difficult to understand why, unless it is due to its being within a tram-ride of Vienna, which is still more expensive.

Standing as it does, at the junction of three States, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary, the town is trilingual; all public notices are written in the three languages, and all three are heard in the streets.

We had an introduction to Dr Alois Kolísek, a lecturer at the University, so we called on him as soon as possible, and were very kindly received. Dr Kolísek is well known for his great love of his country and its art. He has pictures on his walls by Jóža Úprka, the painter *par excellence* of the Slovak peasant; also a fine portrait of himself by Ondrušek, and portraits of his parents. We were struck by the beautiful smiling face of his mother. He pointed out a series of three pictures, by different artists, showing the Slovak at work, at prayer and at leisure. In the first he is using a harrow in the open fields; in the second he is wrapt in meditation; in the third he is telling fairy-tales to the children. Beautiful costumes, embroideries, and other handiwork from Slovak villages were arranged about the room, and we were glad to examine everything under the guidance of such an expert. A dulcimer or *cembalo* stood in one corner. It is the Slovak national instrument. Dr Kolísek sat down at it and most skilfully played national melodies, his hands with the two little hammers flitting like lightning over the wires. He sang Slovak songs to this accompaniment; a song of Janošík, the brave Slovak Robin Hood, who tells how he has been driven to a brigand's life by the tyranny of the overlord; and another, a love song. As we looked and listened we felt we were having a splendid introduction to Slovakia through the medium of this son of hers who understood and interpreted her so well.

When we were leaving, he gave us each a portrait of himself sitting at the *cembalo* (reproductions from the oil-painting), and also an amusing caricature showing a meeting between himself and Dr Seton-Watson, "Scotus Viator," who has so

long been known as the champion of the oppressed Slovak race.

Through his introduction we visited two Slovak ladies, and with them we spent a delightful evening, seeing more products of Slovak art, and hearing more national music; learning the distinctive symbols used in Slovak embroidery—the cock, the heart, the apple, the tulip—and to recognize the local dress of many of the villages.

The most interesting buildings of Bratislava are the old thirteenth-century town hall and the fourteenth-century gateway tower of St Michael, which terminates in a bulbous spire, full of character. This spire is always appearing wherever one goes, and it is hardly possible to get a characteristic view of the streets of Bratislava without its being included, near or far, in the picture.

The town hall contains the museum, including wonderful embroideries and crafts of the country. The original thirteenth-century door of the town hall is also shown, made of steel on wood, with grotesque heads cut out of the steel. When the massive handle is turned it draws eight bolts at once. Of greater interest are two bronze heads, the work of a blacksmith of Bratislava. He modelled them from his own face seen in the glass, and they recall the studies in facial expression made by Leonardo da Vinci. The blacksmith was responsible for about forty such heads; the rest are in Warsaw. They are so forcible in expression as to be almost caricatures, but they are remarkably good work. In the new town hall, formerly the Bishop's palace, there are beautiful old tapestries. These were only discovered in recent times, when repairs were being carried out, for damask had been hung in front of them to hide them. A Magyar custodian showed us round, but we were accompanied by a Czech friend who interpreted for us. He told us that if he had ventured inside the town hall before the war this very Magyar would have kicked him out. Whenever possible, the Magyars have been retained in office under the Republic, on the principle of toleration instead of retaliation,

which the Government strives to follow, and every one in the country who mentioned this to us heartily applauded it.

The Jews' quarter has many picturesque old houses in it, and also a flaunting new synagogue. Close by are steps leading up to the castle, which is now in the occupation of the military; but the view from the walk round the walls is quite sufficient reason for climbing the hill. Southward we look across the Danube to the vast rolling plains of Hungary, northward into Slovakia to the Little Carpathians. Just across the river is the beautiful Petržalka Park, where in early summer one can gather armfuls of lilies of the valley, and watch the little green frogs in the trees. Masses of willows droop over the swirling brown waters a little way up-stream; down-stream is the winter port where seven large docks are being constructed, for ships to lie up safely during the ice period.

Down by the docks we were shown the buildings where the Bratislava Fair is held. We were not able to attend the fair, but we knew it covered a wide range of interests, both practical and artistic, from English pigs to Slovak pottery.

Lady Muriel Paget, who is gratefully remembered in Slovakia and Ruthenia for her good work for the Red Cross just after the war, includes in her varied knowledge a great understanding of pigs, and she is trying to introduce a better breed into Slovakia for the benefit of the peasants. That is how English pigs come to find themselves, with surprise, in Bratislava Fair.

At the Peace Treaty, Slovakia was made to extend for a few kilometres to the south of the Danube in the neighbourhood of Bratislava. Farther east, the river itself is the frontier. When the Magyar Bolsheviks fought against the Czechs in 1919, and tried to enter Bratislava, the Czechs held one end of the bridge and the Magyars the other; but fortunately neither side destroyed it, because each hoped to win.

We crossed the strong, swift river by the ferry-steamer which plies continually. The view of Bratislava from the farther shore near the entrance to the Petržalka Park is shown in Plate

VI. It is only an hour by steamer to the frontier at Devín, where the river Morava joins the Danube, and where the fine old Castle of Devín stands high on a rock above the stream.

We were taken to see the carpet-weaving, which is carried on for the purpose of maintaining home industries in Slovak villages. The women and girls (many of them widows) are taught to weave, and then paid by the piece until they are experienced enough to work independently. Two of the carpets on the looms were an order for the big hotel at Štrbské Pleso. The weavers looked very happy at their work, and, with the brilliant carpets, and the gay wools being sorted, or lying in heaps, they made a picture full of life and colour. The designs were all genuinely Slovak in character. The society which organizes the work is known as the S.U.P. ("Society of Art Industries"). It was formed in 1920 to encourage and help to sell all kinds of Slovak art products. The oldest society with similar aims was started in 1895, and is now known as the "Detva," under the direction of the well-known architect, Mr Dušan Jurkovič. Six thousand people all over Slovakia work for this society.

Not only have beautiful embroideries always been designed and executed by the simple Slovak peasants, but every kind of craft necessary for the home has been carried on by them. Slovak art is based on the natural longing to beautify the home. Pottery, wood-carving, painted furniture and paintings on the walls of the houses, inside and out, have all been means of expressing the love of beauty in form and colour; and everything they do shows a true artistic sense and individual character. Gay little jugs and plates, decorated with tulips, cocks and every variety of flower and fruit and bird, make a brave show on every cottage wall, where they stand in rows on little hanging shelves.

The bed-coverings are beautifully embroidered, and the pillows are often tied up with bright coloured ribbons, while the wooden bedsteads and cupboards are carved, and decorated with coloured designs.

This has all been done just for the love of beauty, and not as a means of livelihood. Now, however, with changing times, there is danger that the home-crafts will fall into disuse, and that the products of the factory will gradually take their place, so the peasants are being encouraged to continue their handicrafts, and helped to find a ready market for them.

Much of the art which originated in Slovakia was called "Hungarian" when the Magyars controlled the destinies of the Slovaks. In the galleries of Vienna and Budapest both pictures and embroideries were often labelled "Hungarian," when they were really the work of Slovak artists.

The decorated eggs, known as "kraslice," from a verb meaning "to beautify," are quite unlike anything that is to be seen elsewhere. They are painted in rich colours with most delicate and beautiful conventional designs. No copy is used, but the village girl follows a natural and spontaneous instinct, and with a steady hand and a true eye guides her brush over the rounded surfaces. It is the custom to give these away as Easter eggs.

Yet another society for encouraging Slovak embroidery is known as the "Lípa" (lime tree), and has its headquarters at Turčianský Svatý Martin. This small town has long been the centre of Slovak national culture, having been chosen for the seat of the Slovenská Matica, or "Slovak Treasury," a society for encouraging the national language, art, culture and industry, endangered by Magyar rule.

A fine collection of national art treasures and memorials of every kind was made and housed here, and annual "Chronicles" were published. But the Magyars were alarmed at such success; they dissolved the society, confiscated its buildings, and also property amounting to 200,000 crowns, and removed much of the valuable collection to Budapest. The rest, without a proper home, was left to moths and mice. This was in 1875. In 1896 a new Slovak Museum was opened and a limited company was formed, so that the Magyars could not touch it.

The past attitude of the Magyars to the Slovaks may be explained by the fact that they as a race are diminishing in numbers while the Slovaks are increasing, and all their acts of tyranny have been the result of fear lest they should lose their position as "the dominant race." For this reason they have wanted to keep the Slovak peasants ignorant, as a race of boors, fit only to till the soil; and also to destroy, if possible, the national consciousness, under the mistaken impression that it was to their own interest to do so.

All the Slovak secondary schools, maintained by private subscriptions, were closed in 1874 and 1875, and in all the State schools Magyar was made the only language of instruction. Early in the twentieth century the Magyar teachers were even forbidden to use Slovak as a medium for teaching Magyar.

Thus it was hoped to crush out the use of the Slovak language by raising up a generation who should despise it, as the language of ignorance. To some extent these efforts have been successful, for many better-educated Slovaks are to-day Magyar in all but origin.

To give another instance of the petty tyranny which was exerted, it was strictly forbidden for high school students and others to wear "embroidered shirts"—to do so was considered an "unfriendly demonstration to the government"! Naturally this had the effect of making the Slovaks more than ever wedded to their national costumes. The attitude of the Magyars would have its comic side if it had not been too much mixed with tragedy.

We can picture what it must have been to live in a small Slovak town before the war, with Magyar as the language of the wealthy and official classes, of the schools and colleges, of the Jews and the business world. Any one who spoke Slovak was called a "Pan-Slav"; it was the language of a despised race, of the "pariahs" of Hungary. Many Slovaks could not resist the temptation to raise themselves in the social scale by speaking Magyar and trying to disguise their origin.

Others, on the contrary, never ceased to turn their thoughts towards the freeing of their nation, and worked quietly to this end, in conjunction with the Czechs, and with Slovaks in other countries.

The Slovak national anthem was written by Jan Matúška at the time of the revival in the nineteenth century, and set to an ancient melody. Opening with the words " Nad Tatrou sa blýska " (" Over Tatra it is lightening "), it summons the Slovaks to wake from their heavy sleep. Then it rises to a note of triumph : the hour has struck, the Slovaks are awaking to claim their freedom, and nothing can resist them if they hold together !

The Jews usually sided with the Magyars, conniving with them to keep the Slovaks ignorant, and then trading on this ignorance. The Jews were the purveyors of spirits, and the Hungarian Government prohibited temperance societies. Thus in many ways they played into each other's hands.

But in spite of every effort, the great mass of the people continued to speak Slovak and to be Slovak in feeling.

Then came the revolution. On October 30th, 1918, the Central Slovak National Council issued a declaration at Turčianský Sv. Martin, to the effect that the Slovaks regarded themselves as an integral part of the Czechoslovak nation. Over one hundred local Slovak National Councils identified themselves with this declaration.

In some districts the attitude of the Jews immediately after the revolution showed a ludicrous change of front. The language they had always despised was now to become that of the State, and they tried painfully to recall a few expressions they had heard used by the servant girls ! Jewish children were at once sent to Slovak teachers. As for those Slovaks who had renounced their race under the Magyars, many of them now outwardly became Slovaks of the Slovaks. They were given the name of " Octobrists," because the sudden change in their

views dated from the declaration of October 30th. Their sympathies are still Magyar, and they form rather a difficult element in the Republic.

The Matica was revived soon after the declaration of October 30th, and has since developed great activity.

. . . . . .

The rail from Bratislava to Žilina, brings us to Trnava, called "the Slovak Rome" because of its many churches; then to Piešťany, a watering-place on the Váh, where large hotels are built on a thick concrete plate which floats on the surface of warm mud!

Many visitors from all over the world come for the sake of the hot springs.

This is one of the districts most famous for the beauty of its costumes, especially for the elaborate gold and silver embroideries on the white linen caps and large puffed sleeves worn by the women, together with very rich colouring in waistcoats, aprons and ribbons. We were able to buy two very beautiful Piešťany dresses of the best type from a school teacher, for unfortunately they are little worn now in the towns.

Thirty miles higher up the river is Trenčín, famed for its ancient castle and its past glories; also as the scene of Palacký's education for three years, 1809–1812.

Arriving at Trenčín late one dark evening, we wondered whether we should pass the famous castle on the way to the hotel, but we saw no sign of it. Then, glancing from our window—a back window—we caught our breath with wonder. Quite close to us a huge *something*, glinting with dim mysterious light, rose high, right up above our heads, blotting out the stars. We knew it must be the castle on its rocky hill, though we were too close under it to see more than the outer wall and watch-towers.

In former days the castle dominated, in every sense of the word, the town that lies at the foot of the hill. Now the town owns the castle, which is a mere ruin, albeit a beautiful one,

35. TRENCIN CASTLE

silent and empty, in striking contrast to its former state and splendour.

It is said that it was first founded by the Roman general, Terencius, in 176 A.D., when he was fighting in the service of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius; and its very name is said to come from his. The town began later, with a row of houses beneath the castle rock, close round which the river Váh used then to flow, much closer than it does now.

In the early fourteenth century Matthias Čák, the Count of Trenčín, became "King" of all Slovakia, as we have seen (page 13).

Under Stephen Zápolský in the fifteenth century the castle shone with fabulous splendour. Eight hundred gaily caparisoned horsemen streamed from its gates to escort Barbara Zápolský, the governor's daughter, to Cracow, for her marriage with the Polish Prince. Since 1790 it has been in ruins, and we may wander where we will, noting the signs of vanished splendour, and the inscriptions which record the names and deeds of former lords.

Below the main mass of buildings, but within the enclosing walls, we saw the little shed which now covers the castle well. An aged man came forward and offered to show us this famous well, which descends into the solid rock for a depth of nearly 330 feet. He fetched, with the keys, a long wooden skewer, on which were threaded many pieces of paper. Leaning over the railing of the wide stone mouth of the well, he lit the paper at one end, and twirling the blazing mass in his fingers he threw it down. It hit the wall and rebounded from side to side several times; then was caught in an air current, and whirling very rapidly descended in the very middle of the shaft, till at last it touched the water and was extinguished.

The old man told us the story of how the well was made. Stephen Zápolský brought home from the Turkish wars a beautiful girl, Fatima, whom he gave to his wife, Hedviga, for a slave. When peace was made there came a young Turkish merchant called Omar, who begged Zápolský to let him buy

back his betrothed, Fatima. Zápolský refused in these words: "When you win water from the Trenčín rock, you may win tears of pity from my eyes." Omar took him at his word, and set to work to dig a well in the rock. After three years he reached a spring; and the springs of pity in Zápolský's breast were also touched—the maid was freed.

It is a picturesque story; but in Baedeker we find merely the prosaic phrase: "The well was dug by Turkish prisoners," and this was actually the case, during a very long siege.

From "Matthias's Tower," over 100 feet high, there is a most beautiful view of the valley of the Váh, with the Little Carpathians and the White Carpathians rising beyond town and river, and the long line of the Inovec Mountains on the east.

CHAPTER XIV

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is if possible even more beautiful in the autumn than in the spring, and the weather is generally more settled. During a five weeks' sketching tour with a friend in Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Ruthenia, we only had occasion to use an umbrella twice.

I propose now to describe this tour, with one or two digressions to earlier visits paid in the spring and summer.

We reached Prague from London on a September afternoon and, after securing rooms at our hotel, went straight to Čedok, the travel agents, to change money and buy a railway guide.

This railway guide cannot be passed over with a mere casual reference. It was our constant friend, and, indeed, it is a masterpiece of its kind. There is nothing one needs to know upon a journey which cannot be discovered within its pages, set out in the clearest way. There are signs to indicate at every station whether there is a restaurant (represented by a crossed knife and fork), or merely a buffet (represented by a cup). We are told whether the platform is on the right hand or the left at any given station, and if a train does not run every day we are hit in the eye by a mark which it would be impossible to overlook. There are many trains which do not run every day; there are trains which run only on Sundays; trains which run only on Sundays and saints' days; trains which run only on week-days; trains which run only on working-days; and trains which run only on school-teaching days. This last is a sign of the importance attached to education. In a country where so much of the population lives in villages, the children have to travel to

school by train in large numbers, and special carriages are labelled "For School Children."

A list of recommended hotels, which we found on the whole very reliable, is also included in the guide, and there is a convenient list of the towns with two or more stations, giving the distance between them by road.

With this guide we found no difficulty whatever in making all the connections in travelling from one end of the country to the other, and up and down on branch railways without having to ask any questions, and without having a single hitch.

The fares are on the whole decidedly lower than in England; but there are some curious differences. Travellers by express trains have to pay an extra charge, and on short distances this is relatively very heavy. For instance, the ordinary first-class fare for a distance of 12 kilometres (about 7 miles) is six crowns (about 10d.), but by express the fare is increased by 24 crowns. However, the extra is hardly noticeable on long distances, for it only amounts to about eight shillings on 800 miles. There is much greater advantage given on long-distance journeys than there is in England. One can travel first-class express, as far as from London to John o' Groats, for about £2 10s., and the same distance third-class by a slow train, for about fourteen shillings!

The morning after reaching Prague we took the eleven o'clock train to Domažlice. What a comfort not to have to waste time waiting at the police station to have our passports stamped! Up to January 1924 this had been still necessary, and the only amusements had been to guess at the nationalities of the very cosmopolitan crowd in the waiting-room, and to study the fine photographs of the country hanging on the walls.

We only just succeeded in catching the train, and it was nearly full when we reached it. The Czechoslovak State railways make no undertaking to provide *seats*, but only to *convey* passengers, so that those who cannot find seats must remain in the corridors of the class for which they have paid. Some

sense of humanity is shown in the provision of hinged seats in the corridors, which later we often preferred to seats in a crowded compartment.

Another custom of the State railways gives rise to amusing situations.

We once found ourselves in a carriage which was labelled 2 outside, but inside, on the door of the corridor there was the first-class sign. We pointed out this discrepancy to the inspector when he came along, and he simply changed the I into a II. But a man in the carriage who had a first-class ticket was very indignant, and marched off to find another seat, with more "first-class" companions. Again, on our first arrival, when we were bestowing a neat packet of paper under the seat, a Czech fellow-passenger looked at us with horror, telling us we could be fined for doing what might occasion a fire, and he saved us from such a fate by throwing the packet out of the window himself.

Our only fellow-passenger was a quiet middle-aged man. Noticing the sketching-stool amongst my luggage, he started talking about painting, telling us how he delighted to paint (in oils) in the Swiss mountains, where he went every year with his wife. He said he was a Czech, but before the war he had been attached to the Ministry in Vienna. Now his home was in Prague, where he had a collection of forty paintings by good Czech artists, several by Schwaiger, whose works fetch high prices now; for one he had been offered 40,000 crowns, but he would not part with it. His enthusiasm for art made him a very pleasant companion, whether he spoke of the wonderful treasures in the galleries at Vienna, or of his beloved Swiss mountains, or of Beethoven and modern composers.

"Only Segantini could paint glaciers and snow mountains," he cried; "I try myself to paint them as I see them—the snow is never white, it is yellow! The shadows are never dark, they are blue!"

Speaking sometimes in French, and sometimes in Czech,

he gave us an interesting glimpse into the life of a cultivated and cosmopolitan Czech gentleman. Every evening after dinner, he told us, he played one of Beethoven's sonatas on the piano, beginning with No. 1, and going through them all in regular order. At the moment he was on his way to Plzeň to play over with a lady a new composition by Suk, for four hands. It was in MS., for it was not yet published. Having no children, he and his wife found their greatest joy in beauty and art. For himself active exercise was necessary—tennis and gymnastics out of office hours, and climbing in the Swiss mountains with his sister in the holidays. He told us modestly that once in the mountains he had held a lady who had fallen, for seven minutes, until help arrived. She weighed nearly 90 kilo (14 stone). All this and more was related very simply and with well-founded confidence that it would interest us, so the two hours' journey to Plzeň passed very rapidly. There the great square and the old Gothic church, with its lofty spire, are well seen from the station.

At Plzeň also are the vast Škoda Iron Works, which, second only to Krupps' in munition-making during the war, took the earliest opportunity to " beat their swords into ploughshares " after the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic ; in other words, they began to turn out locomotives instead of war material, and early in 1920 they completed their first. Now several hundreds can be finished every year, some for export to various countries, the rest for home use. Almost every imaginable kind of machine is made here, including motor-cars and motor-ploughs, and many thousands of workmen are employed.

At Domažlice, an hour and a half farther on, I had begun work the previous year which I was now very anxious to finish. It is a particularly interesting town in the heart of the country of the ancient race known as the Chods or Chodové. The mountain range of the Šumava here forms the German frontier line, and through the passes in these mountains the Germans used to make their attacks on Bohemia. The duty of the

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Old Wooden Cottage, Domažlice, Bohemia

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Chods was to act as watchmen on the frontier, and to light beacon fires from hill to hill on the approach of an enemy. In return for such services they had enjoyed from the ninth century special rights and privileges. In the Museum of Domažlice are still preserved documents yellow with age, sealed with the royal seal of Bohemia, confirming to the people their liberty in return for their frontier services. The symbol they bore on their flag was a dog's head in token of their faithful watch, and they were therefore known as the " Psohlavci " or " Dogheaded." The word " Chod " means " one who walks," and was also given to them because of their patrol duties.

Their special freedom and responsibilities have given to these people a sturdy independence of character, and an individuality of type which they have never lost.

During the seventeenth century, that blackest of all black periods in Bohemia, the Chods had their share in the general suffering, and were deprived by force of their ancient rights. They were first heavily taxed, and then sold as serfs to a stranger, Laminger, whose agents used force to compel the peasants to work for him. Some of their precious documents were taken from them and destroyed.

A young farmer of the village of Oujezd, named Jan Sladký but usually called Kozina after his farm, acted as a brave leader in the Chods' resistance to tyranny ; but such an unequal conflict could have but one end, and in 1695 Kozina was taken prisoner and hanged in the great square at Plzeň. The memory of this simple hero lives to this day amongst the Chods, by whom he is regarded almost as a saint. His history is recorded by the veteran writer, Alois Jirásek, in the novel *Psohlavci*, and in the opera of the same name. In October 1895, two hundred years after his execution, a statue representing a Chod watchman in broad-brimmed hat, with dog and staff, was erected to his memory on a hill near his native village a few miles from Domažlice.

The Czech painter, Jaroslav Špillar, made the Chod people his special study. He lived and worked amongst them all the

early part of this century, and was much beloved. They say now in Domažlice, " He painted the soul of the Chods," and many a householder has a treasured original hanging on his walls.

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The ancient name Domažlice means " the people who live at home," indicating delightfully the free and independent status of the inhabitants. The Germans used to call it Taus, which sounds like a corruption of " Zu Hause," but is really from Tuhost (a fortress).

It was the very first town of Czechoslovakia that I visited after Prague, because I had heard of the beauty and brilliance of the costumes, as well as of the charm of both people and place. On that first visit, through a mistake in a train, we did not arrive till nine o'clock on a very wet April evening, and then we found no means whatever of conveyance to the town, which is about 2 kilometres from the station. After diligent inquiry we discovered a hotel-chambermaid, who promised to guide us; our luggage we left to be fetched later. The streaming heavens and dark bepuddled road made the distance seem very long; but at last we reached the high-arched entry to the Hotel Koruna.

It was probably unusual to have two foreign guests arrive so late without warning, but they had plenty of room for us. In fact, they were able to give us two very large rooms, with two monster beds in each, the bedding covered with crimson satin, beneath white embroidered linen covers. Then what about our luggage? The bus was out of use because of the indisposition of one of the horses—so much we gathered—but my short acquaintance with the language was a difficulty. However, when we were having supper shortly after, we found ourselves being addressed in good English, but with a decided American twang. The speaker was an American Czech whom our host had fetched from an important Sokol meeting to act as interpreter for us. We were very apologetic when we heard what had happened; but our new acquaintance said he

was glad to be of use, and he kindly gave us any help we needed throughout our stay. He told us he had been a barber in the United States for fifteen years, and had joined the Czech legionaries during the war. Now that his country was free he had come back to his old home to stay, having saved enough to live upon quietly, even if he adopted no regular occupation.

Early the next morning we had our first glimpse of the marvellous blaze of colour which is to be seen on any Sunday or festival day where the ancient costumes are still worn. Outside the parish church, whose high oval tower dominates the little town, was an ever-changing array of brilliant colours, the black headkerchiefs, which are so typical of the Chod country, only serving as a foil to the gay neckerchiefs, aprons and skirts.

This was the real thing! Costumes and embroideries such as John Hus himself must have seen in the fourteenth century! Unfortunately in this region it is only the women who still wear the ancient dress. The men, with few exceptions (one of whom is shown in Plate IX.), have entirely adopted the ordinary European clothes, which, as we all know, can lay no claim to beauty either of form or colour. The broad-brimmed Chod hat and the long coat, once worn by the old men, are now to be seen only in the local museum.

The rain came down heavily all that afternoon, but we hired a carriage and drove out to Oujezd, the village of the hero Kozina, where I hoped to get a girl to sit for me in the local dress. We called at the schoolhouse, where the teacher and his wife received us very kindly, and while the husband went to find a girl to sit, the wife showed us some beautiful embroideries and shawls which she had bought from the villagers, to prevent them from getting into the hands of the Jews. She also insisted on giving us tea. The husband returned triumphant, and led us through rivers of mud to a farmhouse on the village street. We entered the farmyard through a large wooden gate between two high, solid, square pillars, whitewashed and crowned with red tiles, as also was the crosspiece above the gate. This is the usual imposing entrance to a farmhouse. The house

itself was not at all imposing. It was built of logs, laid horizontally, and whitewashed, with a wide band of jade-green next the ground. The roof was of wooden slats, worn grey by the weather. There seemed something incongruous in finding a rubbish-heap just outside the front door, and at the same time an electric light to help you not to fall into it! Electric lighting is much more common in the villages here than it is in England. Great use is made of their water-power, and rapid developments are taking place towards a wider extension of the supply.

There was plenty of room in the yard to have had the rubbish-heap farther from the house, but it would have been less convenient for the cocks and hens, who seemed to have the run of both, and also to the goodwife when she wanted to throw something away.

Inside, we received a warm welcome in more senses than one. The usual mottled stove occupied a good deal of space in the roomy farm-kitchen. It was working at high pressure, for it was a cold day, and outside the rain was turning to snow. Opposite the stove, making a delightful patch of warm yellow, were fifteen healthy young goslings in charge of a mother-goose, and enclosed in a pen filled with straw. Two painted wooden bedsteads, with feather beds piled high, covered with spotlessly white embroidered linen, stood in another corner of the room. The rest of the furniture consisted of a cupboard with gaily decorated jars, jugs and plates on the shelves, the jars all labelled with the names of their contents; a table, benches and chairs. A few little pictures of saints hung on the walls. The human occupants were the mother, with three or four children, the grandmother, and Kačenka, the maiden aunt, who was to be my sitter. She worked on her brother's farm. They shook hands with us, and first we had to eat bread and salt with them. Then Kačenka went and sat near the window, and I began my sketch under the greatest difficulties, for there was hardly any light, and I was surrounded by interested watchers who plied me with questions all the time.

PLATE VIII

A Peasant Girl at Oujezd, Bohemia

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Some of the villagers dropped in, and made the room still fuller and hotter. Kačenka is a charming girl, and she showed off her beautiful dress to great advantage. It was her winter dress, with a long-sleeved blue cloth jacket. In summer a white embroidered blouse with short puffed sleeves and a gay waistcoat would be worn instead.

All too soon the scanty daylight vanished, and we had to take our leave.

It was nearly eighteen months before I was able to finish that sketch, and then the weather was delightful, and warm enough for sitting outdoors. We walked over from Domažlice, having sent a message to say we were coming; but we were not sure if Kačenka could sit, for it was the busy harvest season.

Our American-Czech friend accompanied us. On the way he pointed out the passes in the Šumava mountains through which the German invaders used to come. The forests on the mountains served as useful barriers, but the passes had to be cleared of trees for the sake of communication during times of peace. When there was cause to fear invasion, the passes were blocked as much as possible with felled trees. He also showed us the "Potok," an artificial watercourse made in the Middle Ages to bring the water from the mountains to Domažlice. Before it was made, all this water ran into Bavaria. Sometimes the canal has to be carried along the top of a high embankment; it is seen running as a stream through the streets of Domažlice. Originally it served to fill the moat outside the walls.

He told us that the peasants about here retire when they are old into a small cottage on the farm, and one son takes over the management. He has to buy out his brothers and sisters, and for this purpose he often borrows money from a money-lender, usually a Jew, and in this way the Jews get a hold over the people. During the war the farmers made so much profit on their produce that many of them were able to pay off all these debts, and are now well-to-do. The old parents have to be supplied with a certain share of the produce of the farm as part of the contract.

We were passing countless fruit trees covered with pears and apples, and we asked how it was that the fruit on these lonely roads was not stolen. We learnt that there were watchmen every few miles to guard the trees, many of which are the joint property of the community, and that there are heavy penalties if any one is caught. But it seems an impossible task to guard several miles of fruit trees, even in daylight, and we concluded that the right feeling of the community must be the real safeguard against theft, which apparently is not common.

When we reached Oujezd we found a little niece had been left to watch for us, and she ran off at once to fetch Kačenka, who presently arrived from the fields, carrying her rake, and quickly changed into her holiday clothes.

Oujezd, with its whitewashed houses, looked even prettier in the autumn than it had done in the spring. Numbers of tall pear trees grow in the cottage gardens, and beneath them purple and flame-coloured cactus dahlias were blooming freely. As we walked home, a woman gathering pears offered some to us. We thought she meant to sell them, but she would take nothing in return except our thanks.

While I was painting, my friend visited the monument to Kozina on the top of the hill above the village, and our American guide was busy gathering scarlet hips from the rose-bushes. He told us they used them to make a drink, putting them with water in a bottle, and standing them out in the sun. After that we noticed many bottles full of these berries on the window-sills of Domažlice.

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The room where we had our meals in the hotel was the only public room, and one end was used as a club by the inhabitants, with games going on every evening, and heated political discussions, which it amused us to see and hear. Near to us at the table there sat a fair-haired man whom we found to be a Dutch artist. He asked if we had seen the wonderful fourteenth-century Madonna in the Klášter Church, more beautiful than the celebrated Nuremberg Madonna of

about the same period, and when we said "No," he offered to take us to see it.

A fine wrought-iron gate leads into the old-fashioned garden, but through its bars are seen from the street the deep-yellow-washed buildings. The Madonna is on a pedestal, high up against a blank side-wall of the chancel; the gilding and colouring of her drapery are in perfect preservation, and the poise of the figure is very expressive in its simplicity. It is, of course, carved out of wood. The monks of the Klášter had allowed the Dutch artist to use part of their building as a studio, and we saw the delightful work on which he was engaged. It was not very far advanced—a figure-subject, of a girl and her two lovers, all in the costume of the Chods.

Another day he took us to see an old bagpiper. This old man is one of the last survivors of the real Chod type; he is employed to play at weddings and other festivities, in company with a violin and two clarionets. He was quite ready to play to us, but was going to keep on his old clothes, and play in his shirt-sleeves, until our Dutch friend insisted that we must see the real thing and get the right impression. While playing he was quite absorbed in the music, his eyes gazing into vacancy, and he certainly knew how to bring tenderness, sweetness and melody out of such an apparently limited instrument as the bagpipe. The form of his instrument was unlike any we had seen before, with two horns, metal-mounted, curving round, one in front of the player and one behind, at the ends of the pipes. The wind was supplied by means of bellows, which he worked with his left arm. A Czech friend, who was born not very far from here, told us that when he was a child they used to drop coins into the mouths of the pipes of itinerant players, and it never seemed to make any difference to the music!

"Notice when he speaks," whispered the Dutch painter, while he was playing, "his voice is exactly like the notes of his instrument.

And so it was—like the harsher notes!

The oldest house in Domažlice is close to where he lives, and from it we can picture what the whole town looked like several hundred years ago; what, indeed, the greater part of the country looked like, for at one time wooden houses were universal except in the large towns. Fires have been very frequent, owing to the use of wood, so not many *old* wooden houses are left, even in Slovakia.

The high, oval tower of the parish church, the picturesque gateway-tower, leading into the square, and the triple cupola of the twelfth-century castle are landmarks to be seen afar, and group themselves very interestingly in almost any distant view of the town.

We climbed the endless stairs to the top of the church-tower, disturbing the slumbers of the old watchman, who lives up there to give the alarm in case of fire. A wooden balcony runs round outside his little oval room, from which he can overlook the whole town at night, and ring a large bell if need arises. This seems to be the custom of the country, for one often sees a light at the top of the church-towers after dark.

. . . . . .

The square at Domažlice is surrounded by arcades, according to the usual custom in the older towns; and it is a custom that has many advantages. In heat or rain, shopping is made much more pleasant although the shops are apt to be rather dark. Here in Domažlice the vaulting and columns are distempered in various colours, and the latter are very varied in form. I chose a spot to sketch where blue was the prevailing tint. Unfortunately I found too late that I had settled just where the photographs of the latest films were being displayed, and the polite citizens were torn between their desire to see the pictures and reluctance to block my view. They usually solved the problem by squeezing close to the wall. It was also just outside the police station, and an official chair was handed out to me for my things. (See Plate III.)

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The Czechoslovak police force demands a paragraph to

PLATE IX

Old Bagpiper, Domažlice, Bohemia

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itself. It has taken the place of the old Austrian *gendarmerie* who were, of course, more military than civil. The policemen wear dark blue unmilitary-looking uniforms and helmets, and carry only black batons. We always found them very obliging wherever we went. They are modelled, more or less, on the lines of the British police force, but perhaps they have not yet acquired the dignified air of detachment which characterizes the British "Bobby." We must remember the difference in age—a few years as compared with nearly a century! On our first visit to Domažlice we did not know the way to an address we had been given, so we inquired at the police station, and a man was sent with us to show us. Our policeman guide started off sedately, but before long we came in sight of the little shrine on the hill outside the town which marks the site of the battle of Domažlice. This fired his eloquence, and he began to give us a passionate account of the famous battle. The name of one of the leaders escaped his memory.

"Jak se jmenuje? jak se jmenuje?" ("What is his name? what is his name?") he cried, flourishing his black baton. Then suddenly he stopped and knocked at the door of a house we were passing. A Czech friend from Prague who was with us looked at us in comic despair, saying in English, "We are poor children; we are being taken where we do not want to go!"

The house belonged to a teacher, and the policeman very politely requested the loan of Palacký's history, that he might refer to the passage about the battle of Domažlice. The teacher, although in the middle of his dinner, seemed neither surprised nor displeased, but invited us in. So all five heads were soon bent over the history, and we were shown the pictures accompanying the description. Hearing we were English visitors, the teacher insisted on our accepting some coloured reproductions of pictures by Špillar, the artist who devoted himself to painting the history and life of the Chod people. Then we left, as hurriedly as politeness would allow,

that he might finish his meal in peace. We set our feet down firmly when the policeman wanted to take us to the shrine at the top of the hill—" Another day, please," we said.

Eighteen months later, all the policemen who had helped us on the first visit saluted when we met them in the street, and then came forward to shake hands. That is the democratic spirit of Czechoslovakia, a spirit of helpfulness and goodwill. And they were pleased in a childlike way to show that they remembered a face.

. . . . . .

We had noticed that the tariff for each of our two bedrooms at the hotel was marked on the walls as 16 crowns a day (about 2s. 2d.); but when it came to payment we were only charged at the rate of 8 crowns a day. We pointed this out.

" It is quite right," said the chambermaid, " you only slept in *one bed each.*"

After that, who can accuse the Czechs of being too business-like ?

PLATE X

Distant View of Tábor, Bohemia

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CHAPTER XV

THERE is a very good express train which runs eastward straight across country from Domažlice to Brno, the capital of Moravia. Its only drawback is that it starts at the inconvenient hour of 3.55 in the morning. The first time we used it, in April, we left Domažlice in a snowstorm, and had to walk the 2 kilometres to the station, with the hotel porter carrying our luggage. Much of the country passed through is very interesting and picturesque as seen from the train, when there is sufficient daylight to see it. The large ruined Castle of Rábí, destroyed by Žižka during the Hussite wars, is well worth seeing, standing on a green hill, and making a landmark for miles round.

Tábor, the famous Hussite town, is reached at about eight o'clock, and the journey ends at Brno at 12.30.

Tábor will always have very pleasant associations for me, for nowhere did I meet with greater kindness and hospitality. It was there that the proverb was first quoted to me: "Host do domu, Bůh do domu" ("A guest in the house is God in the house"), clearly the proverb of a nation "given to hospitality."

I visited Tábor from Prague one day, arriving at nine o'clock in the morning, with the idea of finding somewhere to stay in a private house, so as to see more of the life of the country than is possible from an hotel. I had an introduction to a pastor who had been in England and spoke English, so my first business was to find him, and, meeting a postman delivering letters, I asked him the way. He thought a moment, and then replied that it was so difficult for a stranger to find that I had better come round with him while he delivered his letters and then he would be free to take me. I found he made a very polite guide.

He murmured apologetically, "Minutku," every time he had to dive into an archway and leave me standing outside, and when he emerged he always took off his cap and bowed before we went on again.

At last his round was finished, and he took me to the pastor's house, which was part of the building used as a church by the Czech Brethren of Tábor. The pastor himself was in Prague for the day, but I saw his charming young wife, and after we had talked a little she offered to go with me to see if she could find me rooms. Before the search was completed I felt I had seen a great deal of the domestic life of Tábor. I was told there was a housing shortage, and it certainly seemed so, for very few people had a whole room to let. They were all very pleasant. One good woman offered to let me share her daughter's room; another offered me a room reached only through her own bedroom; a third was very anxious to tell my fortune by cards; but at last we had to give up the search without having found anything suitable.

Then the pastor's wife said she would take me to see a lady who spoke English, and in one of the oldest parts of this old town she brought me to a wooden door, which led into a delightful little garden gay with spring flowers. We were actually on the ancient town walls, and the little house at the end of the garden was built on the foundations of one of the old pentagonal towers of 1420.

Tábor stands on a hill, and is surrounded on three sides by running water—the river Lužnice and a tributary. A great part of the ancient walls is still standing, and the town cannot be extended in this direction, outside the walls, because of the river and the steepness of the hill. The little house, abutting from the wall, had views in every direction over most beautiful open country, and below the walls the tree-clad slopes of the hill have been turned into very informal pleasure-grounds for the public benefit.

The ladies of the little house, a mother and daughter, received me with the greatest kindness, and the daughter at once said

she had a friend with whom I could perhaps stay as a paying guest. This was a widow lady, whose husband had been a Professor of the History of Art at Prague University, and to her it was finally arranged that I should go in about a week's time.

I was not returning to Prague till seven o'clock that evening, so my new friends asked if they could take me anywhere in the afternoon.

I wanted to see Kozí Hrádek (Goat's Castle) where John Hus had lived in retirement after leaving Prague, and where he had written some of his most important works. They told me it was only a two hours' walk, and that we should have plenty of time for it, so they arranged to fetch me from the hotel after lunch. It was a beautiful sunny day ; the air was fragrant with spring scents, and our walk lay at first chiefly through fields, with the vivid green of young crops all round us. Then we came to pine woods and streams ; and in the very midst of a pine wood at last we came upon the ruins—mere fragments of walls and towers, nowhere more than about 10 feet above the ground. They had been completely grown over in the course of centuries, and were only discovered and excavated within recent times through the enthusiasm of a school-teacher.

The castle itself stood on a little hill with a moat round it, encircled by other mounds now covered with pine trees. When Hus lived here he used to preach to large congregations of the peasants in the open air, and now every year on July 6th, the anniversary of his martyrdom, crowds flock to the spot as to a place of pilgrimage.

It began to rain soon after we reached there, and continued in a steady downpour for all the two-hours' walk back to Tábor. My friends borrowed an umbrella from a tailor in a village we passed through, and insisted on my using it because I had the journey to Prague before me, but we were all pretty wet before we reached shelter. There is a Czech version of " Out of the frying-pan into the fire," which runs " Out of the mud into the puddles," and we illustrated it many times on the way.

We met a small boy bringing the family loaf from the baker's. It was about the size of an umbrella in circumference, and by carrying it balanced on his head he managed to keep perfectly dry !

I was warmed and dried and fed hospitably in the little house on the wall, and then seen off to Prague at seven o'clock, with pleasant anticipations of a future return.

I marvelled gratefully at the kindness of these people, who would take a stranger for a four hours' walk and make her feel so much at home with them.

When I wanted to pay a second visit to Kozí Hrádek the Mayor of Tábor very kindly sent his carriage at seven o'clock in the morning to take me there. I had not met him ; it was just another instance of the kindness invariably shown to strangers.

The town of Tábor was founded in 1420, at the beginning of the Hussite wars, and although very little of the earliest town is left, much of what still stands dates from about 1520. The town hall and the church, both in the square, are of this period, as well as many of the houses. The church is remarkable for its height ; it dwarfs the fine chestnut trees growing just below it. On a May day, when the trees are covered with spikes of creamy flowers, they make, with the church, a pleasant colour scheme, for the walls are yellow-washed and variegated with time and weather, and the high-pitched roof is covered with old red tiles. Its fantastic gables have their counterparts in many of the houses in the square.

Outside the town hall, as well as outside one of the oldest houses, there still stand like ancient dolmens the great stone tables at which the old Táborites partook of the Lord's Supper in both kinds. It was in this square, too, that the chests stood into which the first inhabitants cast all their belongings, to be shared in common, for Tábor was a very early experiment in communism.

But its chief claim to distinction is that it was founded to maintain the rights of liberty of conscience, even as the

PLATE XI

The Square at Tábor, Bohemia

We met a small boy bringing the family loaf from the baker's. It was about the size of an umbrella in circumference, and by carrying it balanced on his head he managed to keep perfectly dry!

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Pilgrim Fathers founded their town of Plymouth two hundred years later. The Táborites, settling themselves in the midst of their enemies, had to fight constantly in self-defence; and this bred in them a grim and sober spirit, which restricted even the games of the children.

The streets of the old town are built to defy the entrance of a foe; they twist and turn upon themselves; many are very narrow, and have no outlet. This adds much to their picturesqueness, as also does the rough paving of the streets, and the weather-worn colouring of many of the buildings.

As a fortress it was considered impregnable in the fifteenth century, protected as it is, not only by the river, and by its lofty position on a rocky hill, but also by the lake "Jordan," which curves round it on the side away from the river. The Biblical names, "Tábor" and "Jordan," were given by the original founders in accordance with a common Hussite practice.

At the entrance to the square there is a house, built in 1570, covered with very beautiful sgraffito work; soldiers, horses and chariots, with richly elaborated borders framing the windows and doors. The work is carried out with such delicacy and skill as to give rather the impression of sculpture in low relief than of sgraffito.

In due course I went to stay at Tábor, and spent a happy week with the "Paní Profesorová" in her flat; but I was out nearly all day painting, for it was lovely weather. I used to get my midday meal at a little open-air restaurant, with tables set out under blossoming chestnut trees, and with a barefooted hostess in attendance.

The day after my arrival a visitor called to see me, and addressed me in English. This was Dr Josef Hrůša, a professor at the college, who had been studying English for some years, and who held a weekly English class in the town; and he said that if he could be of any service to me, he on his part would be very grateful for the opportunity of talking English. He

offered to act as guide to everything of interest in the town, and I gladly accepted.

In the town hall there is an excellent museum with relics of old Hussite days, the flails and maces with which the peasants fought, and a model of an "armoured car" such as Žižka used. But the most interesting part is the "Hus Hall" full of pictures, books and documents relating to Hus. Round the walls are written Hus's famous words, "Miluj pravdu; braň pravdu; prav pravdu; slyš pravdu" ("Love the truth, defend the truth, speak the truth, hear the truth").

We visited the museum, and also the oldest parts of the town, including the only remaining towers of the fortifications. The fine old gateway known as Kotnov is still standing, with a round tower which originally ended in an "onion-shaped" dome and spire, but is now truncated.

From many points of the town there are very beautiful views, across the river Lužnice, or away to the mountains and pine forests; while from the walls we look down on to clouds of apple-blossom, or the fresh spring shoots of the trees which clothe the hill slopes. Tábor certainly has many attractions, and not the least is its wealth of trees and flowers, above which, in striking contrast, rise its ancient towers and houses.

The surrounding pine forests are the pride and joy of the townspeople. They love these sombre trees better than all the oaks and beeches and chestnuts in the world. On holiday afternoons they wander through the woods above the river, and search for the fragrant lilies of the valley whose green spikes pierce through the tawny carpet of pine needles.

Dr Hrůša asked me to give a reading in English to his class, because they did not often have the opportunity of hearing the language spoken. The book from which they were reading contained short stories by Oscar Wilde, and I was asked to read "The Remarkable Rocket." It was quite a large class, but I noticed that very few laughed at the jokes, and the professor told me afterwards that they were not advanced enough to catch the meaning as I read, although

they could follow with their books for the sake of the pronunciation. But it was rather amusing to see the rows of professors and students listening with absolutely solemn faces to Oscar Wilde's wit.

Dr Hrůša has bravely undertaken the task of translating George Meredith's novels into Czech. He had finished *The Egoist*, and was then at work on *Rhoda Fleming*.

. . . . . .

For making a sketch of the square I had come to the conclusion that the best view would be from an upper window. My friends were walking with me when I said this. They laughed, saying:

"Choose your window and we will undertake to get you permission."

"Do you know *all* the people in the square?" I asked.

"Oh no; but no one would refuse to help in any way they could."

I chose my window, and again they laughed.

"We will do our best; but you have chosen the window of the telegrams-room at the post office, and no one is allowed in there!"

They called at the post office, saw the Director, and obtained his kind permission for me to sit and paint in the room above the telegrams-room which was the *salon* of his private suite. So there I established myself from six o'clock in the morning, and the lady of the house insisted hospitably on giving me refreshment from time to time. Her son was a law student, and spoke English. He was indignant to think that I had been in the town nearly a week, and that no one had told him of the opportunity of getting a little practice.

. . . . . .

A quaint little electric train runs, like a tram, through the fields from Tábor to Bechyně, lower down the river. I spent a market-day there, travelling with the peasants who went to buy and sell, and following them along the winding road from the station. Bechyně, with its castle, is perched high on rocks

above the river Lužnice in a very beautiful situation, and is reached by crossing a bridge and then climbing many steps up the face of the rocks. The square was teeming with cattle, horses and pigs, so I withdrew to sketch in a quiet, cool spot in the pinewoods by the river (see Plate II). When the market was over I returned for lunch to the hotel in the square. The waiter set himself to guess my nationality, beginning with, "Russian?" No doubt they have many Russian refugees. When at last he came to "English?", he said, "You are the first English lady I have ever seen here." Bechyně is much visited as a holiday-resort, as well as for its baths, but chiefly by the Czechs themselves and by Germans.

It was on a hill near here that great meetings of the Hussite peasants used to gather before the founding of Tábor.

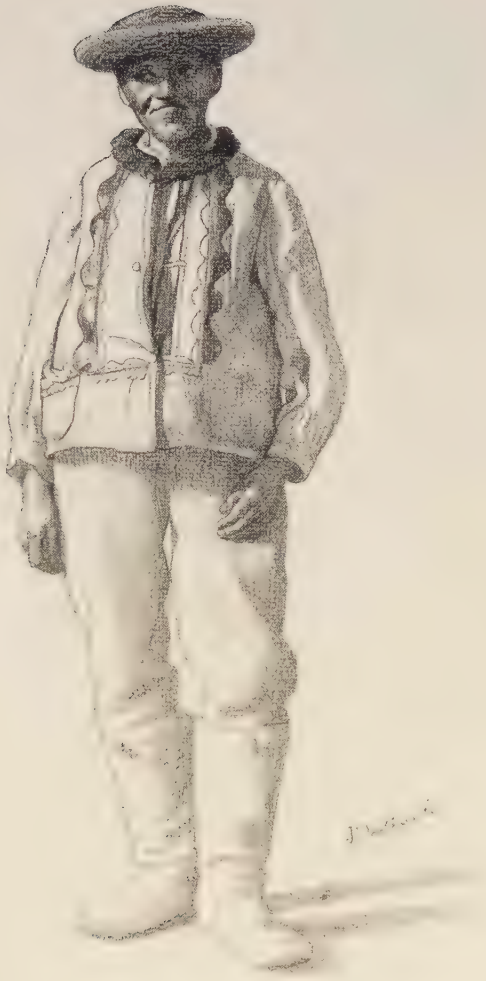
. . . . . .

When I left "Žižka's Town" a little group of these hospitable friends assembled on the platform to say good-bye.

And now, in September, I am again travelling there from Domažlice, and looking forward to meeting them once more.

One of them, from the little house on the wall, was there to meet us at the station, and she insisted on taking us home with her, though we had meant to go to the hotel. We spent some quiet days with her and her mother, and found Tábor looking fully as beautiful in its autumn dress as it had done in the spring. One day we walked to the ruins of the Castle of Příběnice, starting at eight o'clock in the morning, for it is a three-and-a-half hours' walk, by the side of the river Lužnice. There were many rafts on the river, and we were much interested in seeing them go through the weirs in front of the mills. The sluices are opened, and as the water rushes down from the higher to the lower level the raft is guided skilfully through the water-gate. Sometimes the miller has the right to hold up the rafts until there is enough water, so that the letting out of some of it should not interfere with his machinery.

We saw one tremendously long raft, made in seven sections, joined together with supple branches threaded through holes.



34. A SLOVAK PEASANT

The longest section contained trees at least 60 feet long. The raftsman told us the total length was 115 metres (about 370 feet). We wondered how they could manage such an unwieldy length in the turns of the river. A great deal of it was much under water, and the three men working with bare feet had hung up their boots and extra clothes high above the water-level. The Lužnice and the Vltava, into which it flows, are not so rapid as the Váh in Slovakia ; but they make many more twists, so that the joints in the rafts have to be very flexible. The journey to Prague (roughly 100 miles by river) was going to take them three days, they said.

Our way often lay through pine forests ; sometimes these were so dense that an artificial darkness descended upon us, and we could see nothing but the bare stems all round, for sufficient light did not penetrate to encourage green growth. Everything was of one colour, the brown colour of pine trunks and pine needles, except where brilliant red toad-stools, spotted with gold, shone out like lamps in the dark.

At last we came, high up above the river, to the remains of the castle which was held of old by the enemies of the Táborites ; and very scanty remains they were. Looking down to the river we could see the Adamovský Ostrov, a beautiful green island surrounded by willow trees. There dwelt the Adamites, a fanatical section of the Táborites who believed that by returning to the customs of the Garden of Eden they could live in primitive innocence. They were a very small community, and they did not last long.

From the castle we came to the inevitable restaurant low down by the river, with a verandah approached by wooden steps, and chickens running about outside. While we were waiting on the verandah for an omelette to be made some other visitors arrived. There came bounding up the steps a girl with a bright attractive face, and with dark hair parted in the middle and coiled over each ear. She was warmly greeted by our friends, for she was a young writer whom they had already mentioned to us, and had wanted us to meet. Růžena

Schwarzová is her name, and she won the Julius Zeyer Prize for her book of poems in 1918—the award of the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature and Art. Since then she has published other poems and short stories. She and her companion came and talked to us while we still waited for our lunch. When at last it appeared it was not omelette after all. The good woman, who had said she had nothing for us, evidently wanted now to give us a pleasant surprise. For we began with delicious soup—chicken broth—with fragrant herbs from the garden and bits of black mushroom floating in it. Then we had very young chicken fried in breadcrumbs, with the cranberry compôte for which Bohemia is famous. And we were obliged to conclude that there was one chicken less running about outside than when we had arrived.

Růžena Schwarzová and her friend walked home with us. Most of the way she sang to us Czech and Slovak songs ; chiefly Slovak, for she has travelled much in Slovakia, with her knapsack on her back, and she learnt the songs from the peasants there. She loves tramping with a knapsack, and was proposing shortly to make a long stay in Jugoslavia.

" The whole world is my university," she said.

The three-and-a-half-hours' walk seemed like nothing at all, so quickly did it pass, as she beguiled the way with her songs, her voice echoing back from the rocks on the other side of the river, and making the raftsmen strain their ears to listen.

It was quite dark by the time we reached Tábor, but we went into her house to see some woodcuts of Slovak peasants which she had to show us. We were leaving by a seven o'clock train the next morning.

PLATE XII

Prachatice, Bohemia.

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J. Mothersole

CHAPTER XVI

FROM Tábor we journeyed southward, towards the Šumava Mountains, to visit the ancient towns of Prachatice and Český Krumlov, two of the centres of the Rožmberk family, which was so powerful in Bohemia from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. But the neighbourhood of Prachatice has a greater claim to historic interest in the eyes of all Bohemians, in that John Hus was born within a few miles of the town, in the little village of Husinec. Tradition has it that he and Žižka went to school together at Prachatice. From the train we can see the white houses of Husinec, clustering round the church on the hillside ; a pretty village, like a maiden dressed in white on the green grass. It is a very beautiful countryside, this, where the great reformer was born and spent his early days ; a country of meadows, and streams, and trees and hills, without the formality of intensive culture that mars the beauty of much of central Bohemia.

Prachatice stands on a hill, and is surrounded by others, much higher. The lofty old Gothic Church of St Jacob, said to have been founded by St Adalbert, dwarfs the surrounding houses. One of its two western towers has fallen.

A road, bordered by trees, leads up from the station, and brings us finally into the square. Here there are many wonderful old houses, richly decorated with figures in fresco and sgraffito work, worth coming a long way to see. In the centre there are the favourite pollarded acacias, grouped round a fountain. At one angle of the square is the Church of St Jacob, and close by is the house where John Hus and John Žižka are supposed to have gone to school. It is crowned with curious battlements. Passing it, we come through a double archway, known as the "Dolejší Brána" (Lower Gate); and,

looking back, we see over its arch a coloured fresco of Vilém of Rožmberk (1535–1592), as a knight on horseback. Above there is the motto, in Latin, "We praise old times, but we live in our own." A row of red Rožmberk roses is just visible below the battlements.

I chose this gateway for the subject of a sketch, and was taken under the wing of a woman who sold picture post cards and other trifles in a little kiosk facing it. She lent me a chair, filled my water-bottle, and let me sit under the ægis of her projecting eaves.

Another old house in the town is pointed out as having been the dwelling of Žižka.

It is only about 4 miles to walk to Husinec from Prachatice, following the course of the river Blanice for the last mile and a half. The cottage where Hus was born has a medallion over the door, and the words: "Mistr Jan Hus. nar. 8 Června (*i.e.* born June 8th) 1369."

Hus means in Czech, "a goose," and Husinec is "a goose-stall." Hence arose the traditional saying of John Hus, quoted by Martin Luther: "You may burn the goose (hus) but one day there will come a swan, and him you will not burn."

Prachatice has remained rather primitive, for there was no railway within twenty miles right up to the closing years of the nineteenth century. It made rich gains during the Middle Ages through the importation of salt, which was brought over the Šumava Mountains. Bohemia has no salt at all within its borders, and not even any sea to evaporate in salt-pans, so it has always been dependent on what it imported. Now Czechoslovakia has very productive salt mines in Slovakia, but the best are in Ruthenia.

Owing to its nearness to the borders of Bavaria, and to the extensive emigration of Czechs from southern Bohemia, Prachatice has more German inhabitants than Czechs, though since the revolution the proportion of Czechs has risen considerably.

PLATE XIII

České Budějovice, Bohemia

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We stayed at a little German hotel, because the proprietor of the Czech hotel, having only recently returned from Russia, had hardly yet got it into working order. We made a point of choosing Czech hotels whenever possible, as being more characteristic of the country.

This whole town and neighbourhood proved most attractive; but we were obliged to push on to Český Krumlov.

On the way we stopped for some hours at Budějovice, a flourishing town on the Vltava, where we had to change trains. The Church of St Nicholas, built in 1500, has a very high detached tower, and is perhaps the most interesting thing to see. This was one of the few towns which remained Roman Catholic during the Hussite wars. Down by the river there is an old monastery, which makes a pleasant picture reflected in the water. It was founded by Přemysl Otakar II, about 1265.

It was dark when we reached Český Krumlov. At the station I asked if there was an omnibus to the Hotel Růže.

"Quick!" said the ticket-collector, pointing with his finger.

We ran and just caught a public conveyance, a sort of landau that was on the point of starting. Our luggage was put in, and we squeezed in also, although it looked full already.

It was a long drive to the town, at first along a country road; but when houses began to appear we felt we were back in mediæval times. We passed under quaint archways, along dimly lighted streets, and rattled over a wooden bridge, above which the lofty tower of the castle loomed impressively. When we reached the square some of the travellers got down at a German hotel, and the proprietor came out and told us it was the best in the town. But we kept to our original plan, and told the man to drive on to the Hotel Růže.

And we did well, for it is delightfully situated, and was very clean and comfortable. Our share of the long drive cost us 6d. each, including luggage.

The hotel occupies part of what was once a Jesuit College, on the high rocky bank of the river Vltava—a fairly wide river

even here, though it has nearly one hundred miles to flow before it reaches Prague. The college was founded by Vilém of Rožmberk at the close of the sixteenth century. His nephew, Peter Vok, who succeeded him, joined the Czech Brethren, and for a time the college was closed. In more recent times the building has been used as barracks. Now there is a very pleasant garden-terrace overlooking the river, where all meals are served when the weather is fine.

The town of Krumlov is built on a double-S-curve of the river, whose course is determined by lofty rocks round which it has to twist. There is always a fascination about a river, and this one is no exception. There are rafts coming down from the mountains to be watched ; there are delightful paths along the edge to be followed. Four bridges have to be crossed in passing from the north end of the town to the south ; and who does not love a bridge ?

We had pleasant rooms given to us, overlooking the river. A weir, first visible only as a white patch in the darkness far below, made a continuous rushing sound in our ears, but this did not prevent the place from being peaceful in the extreme.

. . . . . .

This district used to be called ironically " The Kingdom of Schwarzenberg " because of the immense estates of the family, amounting to nearly eight hundred square miles. It is significant that it was also the district of Bohemia from which the greatest tide of emigration flowed. Prince Schwarzenberg used even to maintain his own " army " ; and the last remnants of this army, which cannot now be recruited, consist of about ten old men, in blue and white uniforms, with cock's feathers in their hats. On the Sunday we spent in Krumlov, the anniversary of the present Prince's grandfather was celebrated by a religious service, and the " army," with its captain, attended in full force, and in full-dress uniform.

The Castle of Krumlov still belongs to Prince Schwarzenberg. It is so vast that it would take weeks to inspect its three hundred rooms properly. The beautiful, lofty, round tower, its most

striking feature, was added by Vilém of Rožmberk, in the sixteenth century.

These Rožmberks were not always noted for their submission to authority. It was Jindřich of Rožmberk who resisted a summons to appear before the Prague law courts, and compelled the messengers to eat the letters they had brought, afterwards hunting them with dogs from the castle gates. That was in the early sixteenth century. An earlier Jindřich was a leader of the " League of the Lords " which resisted King Venceslas IV, and twice the King found himself a prisoner in the Castle of Krumlov.

The tower of the castle dominates the town. It seems to be always turning up in unexpected places, at the end of narrow streets, or topping a group of house-roofs, and it never fails to give just the needed touch to the picture.

And as for the streets, they are full of the atmosphere of the past ; there is sketchable material at every turn.

I was sitting sketching the tower of the castle from a narrow street when two ladies passed me, carrying easels and canvases strapped on their backs. The next morning we were in a shop and I heard a voice saying in English :

" You also are a painter ? "

Turning, I saw it was one of these two addressing me. We learnt later that she was a German, hailing from Berlin, and the other lady was a Czech who had married an Italian. They were just about to go over the castle, and we accepted their invitation to join them.

The castle is reached by a steep slope and a flight of steps from the narrow, twisting main street, close to where it is bridged by an ancient archway, decorated in fresco with red Rožmberk roses and green wreaths. At the top of the steps there are gardens with large trees, and we saw some of the remnants of the " army " sitting beside old guns and heaped-up cannon-balls. The interior furnishing of the castle shows great simplicity. There are large picture galleries; but nothing of great artistic value. The views from the windows are very

beautiful, overlooking the twists of the river, and the tumbled mass of buildings which make up the town, and away beyond to the high mountains. A gallery forms a bridge across a tributary of the river at a very great height above it, whence we look down on its brown foam. This bridge leads to the well-kept castle gardens.

Our German friend was full of sympathy with Prince Schwarzenberg for having had to sell some of his lands in accordance with the new land-regulations, and for still having to keep the castle in repair; but we pointed out what progress had been made since 1620, when both land and castles of the defeated Czechs were *confiscated*, instead of being bought, by the Government of the period.

Three batteries of artillery of the Czechoslovak army are stationed at Krumlov, and the two artists told us that they always had their midday dinner in the kitchen of the officers' mess in the castle. They got permission from the cook for us to join them, for that day. I suppose the officers in the mess-room, through which we had to pass, put us all down as friends of the cook. We found a table, laid for four, behind a screen in a quiet corner of the kitchen, and we were given an excellent meal of soup, stewed meat with vegetables, and hot apple turnover, for the equivalent of 11½d. each. Then the artists took us to see their work. They had two studios, leading out of each other, in a quaint nook by the steps leading to the castle. Their work was very similar in character, and very "modern," painted on large canvases, usually completed at one sitting. They had recently held an exhibition in the town, and they showed us a cutting from a local German newspaper, with a very favourable notice.

"We want to be *strong*," cried the German Fräulein emphatically; and we could see this in their work.

The Czech lady had lost her Italian husband during the war, and under the Austrian police-regulations, she had had a difficult time in Prague as the widow of an enemy alien. While the mark was low she had visited this friend in Germany; now

PLATE XIV

Český Krumlov, Bohemia

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that the gold mark had been backed by the owners of real estate, the exchange in Czechoslovakia was favourable to the Germans.

They made pleasant companions, and it was good to see Czech and German thus exchanging kindnesses. The German was of opinion that a universal language would help to bring us all nearer together, and she thought it should be Latin. She had spent a year at school in England, and therefore spoke English very well.

A beautiful view of Krumlov is to be had from a hill which rises to the south of the town, reached through fields where harvesting and haymaking were going on side by side, and laden apple trees were dropping their golden fruit in the midst of the hay. Great haste was being made to harvest the crops during the lovely weather, and the work was carried on as long as any daylight lasted (Plate XIV).

On the journey from Český Krumlov to Budějovice the railway line was bordered with plum trees, whose boughs hung heavy with fruit, sometimes almost touching the carriage windows as we passed. A detachment of soldiers, in the next carriage to ours, much enjoyed themselves in picking as many plums as they could reach.

In Slovakia, plums are grown in great quantities, and used to be made into plum brandy, a very intoxicating drink. Since the establishment of the Republic, restrictions have been placed on its manufacture, because alcoholism was becoming a serious evil. Some of those interested in the sale feel very aggrieved, and complain loudly of the waste of the fruit crops, and of the loss of "liberty." How did Milton put it?

"License they mean when they cry liberty."

CHAPTER XVII

WE returned to Prague from Český Krumlov, and left again, on a September evening, to spend several weeks in Slovakia, making our first stop at Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš shortly before eight o'clock the next morning. The town is fifteen minutes' walk from the station, and is not at all attractive in itself, but the Nízké Tatra Mountains form a magnificent background, with the height of Ďumbír conspicuous. After coffee and rolls at the hotel, we asked the porter the way to the Děmanovská valley. He described it clearly, adding that we should see red-and-white tourist marks all the way, so we could not fail to find the famous caves.

These tourist marks are a very great help, and they are only one of the blessings which we owe to the Czechoslovak Tourist Club. It provides shelters and cottages in out-of-the-way places, makes paths and roads, publishes guides and maps, arranges excursions and lectures, and protects beauty spots; and it has a membership fee of only twenty crowns a year!

Crossing the Váh by a large iron bridge, we followed the course of the Děmanovská stream, along a rough road through fields and meadows. In some places corn was being gathered in; elsewhere there were root crops. The meadows were most beautiful, covered with a purple veil of meadow saffron, the delicate autumn crocus of our gardens, which seemed to reflect the purple haze of the surrounding hills. We noticed also pale yellow scabious, tiny crimson Indian pinks, white masses of little eye-bright, and a very handsome kind of purple knapweed. As we ascended the stream we left the cultivation behind us, and fir trees in clumps began to appear. Peasants going to and from their work, their ascetic

Slovak faces scored with deep furrows, greeted us, and walked alongside when we responded to their "Dobrý den" (Good-day). They asked if we were going to see the caves, and took a kindly interest in pointing out the way. After two hours' walking, keeping a careful look out for tourist marks, we came to a wooden hut, in a clearing in the fir trees, with seats and tables outside. This looked promising; so did the chickens running about round the tables, picking up crumbs; and soon we were enjoying very good coffee and scrambled eggs. It was a tourist shelter, and we learnt from the good woman in charge that there was sleeping accommodation too. She showed us, in a detached wooden hut, the little bedrooms in the roof reached by a flight of outside stairs. They were all occupied (though the occupiers were not at home), and looked very comfortable and clean in their rigid simplicity. We were told the best cavern could only be seen on Sundays, because it was lighted by electric light, which was not available on week-days; but there was mention of another cave which might be open, so we pushed on hopefully. Passing a cottage we saw a notice up about the caves, so we inquired of a man in the garden. At first he said we could see nothing except on Sundays; then he wavered, and calling to him a very ragged little boy he gave him two candles, and directed him to guide us. The little boy was more than shy; he seemed terrified. We could not get a word out of him, and if we tried to catch him up he started at a trot so as to keep the same distance between us. He led us up until the mountains seemed to tower above us and completely to block our way. Then we came to a gateway with a notice: "To the old cave"; and at this point our guide thrust the candles upon us and fled as fast as he could go, giving us no time to leave a little coin in his hand. We climbed the steep path ahead of us, twisting and turning all the time, with glowing autumn leaves growing beside the path and showering down upon our heads, until we nearly reached the top of the steep cliffs which had frowned above us. There we met a young Slovak who was bringing

two people away from the cave. He carried a basket full of cranberries. We stopped him and made inquiries, whereupon he arranged to meet the other people at the shelter, with the cranberries, in an hour's time, and turned back with us. The path went up and up, very steep and narrow, until at last it widened out into an open space, with seats on either side of a wooden door which was set in the very wall of the cliff. We were given tickets from a roll; then the door was unlocked, and we saw a flight of wooden stairs descending interminably into darkness. An icy cold air swept out into the sunshine and made us shiver. With lighted candles down we went, the steps becoming wetter and slimier as the darkness closed upon us. It was 255 feet to the floor of the cave, right in the heart of the mountain. Cold and damp though it was, it was well worth a visit, for the great glittering ice pillars stood out pure white in the candle gleams, and made a solemn and mysterious picture, such as we had not seen before. We were taken all round the cave beneath icy arches hung with icicles, having to avoid streams of water, and to walk warily over curving beds of ice. There were some stalactites (krápníky); but our guide told us the "new" cave was much more interesting in that respect, though in this one there was the most ice. And afterwards we were glad to have seen the iciest cave, because those at Macocha, which we saw later, can hardly be beaten for the beauty and variety of their "krápníky" formations.

Then out again into the hot sunshine, and down into the valley, where I stopped to make a sketch beneath the cliffs. Looking up at them, though we could not see the door itself, we could just trace the little platform where we had entered, and very small it appeared from below.

A pretty young mother, with two tiny children, was making hay near where I sat, and as she worked she talked to them, with what was very like an Irish lilt, reassuring them in the tenderest and most attractive way. The elder one kept coming and peeping at me through the bushes, and the mother was

telling her not to be afraid, sometimes turning her sentences into little snatches of song, keeping time with the motion of her rake. It is so true that "you cannot separate a Slovak from his songs."

The time came for us to start homewards down the valley. We never dreamt of missing the way, as we had chiefly to follow the stream. But somehow we did go astray, and found ourselves in a large village where we had not been before, floundering through seas of mud which left not a vestige of a footpath visible. Then we noticed that the villagers escaped most of the mud by avoiding the road, going into the meadows through gaps in the hedges, and keeping close to the hedge inside as far as possible. So we followed suit; and having asked the way to Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, we recovered our track; but before we reached the hotel, darkness had fallen completely, and we could hardly distinguish the road under our feet.

Fig. 2.—Slovak Boy at Važec.

. . . . . .

Važec is a typical Slovak village, under High Tatra, and already at a level of nearly 3000 feet above the sea. In spite of having a railway station it has maintained its unspoiled primitiveness in many respects. We went from Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš on a reconnoitring visit one afternoon, arriving shortly before four o'clock. Some children walked alongside of us from the station, two little girls and a boy, with dark Jewish faces. They were well dressed, in "European" fashion, and carried bags of schoolbooks. The elder girl spoke to us in German, asking where we wished to go, and we soon learned that they had come from the big school at Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, that their grandmother kept an inn in the village where we

could sleep if we liked, and that she would be able to give us tea. So we let them take us to the "Hostinec Goldstein," and on the way they showed us the Evangelical Church and School, and the Roman Catholic Church and School, neither of which schools they, as Jews, could attend. They told us there were more Evangelicals in the village than Roman Catholics, and that the Sunday service at the Evangelical Church began at ten o'clock in the morning.

The village is charming, with its whitewashed cottages, its brilliant framing of light green slopes, and its solemn background of mountains. A stream runs through it, turning a mill under the heavy shade of trees, and then zigzagging through a large open space by the church, where hundreds of geese usually disport themselves. The windows of the wooden houses have brilliant painted borders in two colours, either yellow and blue, or red and green. The houses are built on solid stone foundations, and have very wide projecting eaves. Růžena Svobodová, the Czech novelist, used to stay here, to study the people, and she much endeared herself to them, sympathizing with their joys and sorrows.

The village stands too high for fruit trees. The little gardens are very meagre, and the people have to work hard to win a living from the land. In the past many have emigrated; but it is hoped that with better agricultural appliances, and with more peasants owning their own land, conditions generally in these mountainous districts will improve. However, there is still a tendency to look on America as an Eldorado, "where every workman owns an automobile," a tradition which is not altogether unknown in England.

We reached the "hostinec," and were taken through the dirty, bare, common room, into a comfortably furnished inner room, where tea was soon prepared for us by the mother and grandmother. Opening out of this was a large bedroom with two wooden beds covered in dark green, where we were told we could sleep if we wished. But we had so little luggage with us that we decided to return to Sv. Mikuláš. We found

37. THE VILLAGE OF VAŽEC

it very fascinating to watch the village closing down for the night. Great herds of cattle were brought home from the meadows and the hillsides. The usual practice is to have them all in one common herd, for it means much saving of labour. The animals themselves know quite well where to go for the night, and separate themselves from the rest to go and stand patiently by some farmshed or backyard gate until they are let in by their owners. Geese in the same way are brought home in great flocks. Sometimes in their haste to get home they will rise up on the wing, and form a cloud of flapping snowy pinions. Thus the process of general convergence to a common centre goes on, as the village prepares itself for sleep. The sun was setting rosy red, and the tops of the Tatras glowed with a rich reflection above the shadowed village while I sat and sketched until the brilliant light had faded.

Then we found our way back to the station, with stars appearing in a clear sky, and the mountains silhouetted against it on our left.

Returning the next morning, we left our luggage in charge of a porter who locked it into a waiting-room, since there was no luggage office. We went straight to the "Evangelický" church, where a few young men were standing outside, in white woollen cloth suits, and hats with long curving cocks' feathers. Otherwise the streets were empty. They soon went into the church, and we followed. It was already nearly full, and was a brilliant blaze of colour. The young men filled the two galleries; the women and girls were in the body of the church; while right up in the front on one side were elderly men with long hair. One of these assisted the pastor, who was young, with a dark earnest face and a good voice, and wore a white surplice with lace, over a black cassock. The whole congregation was very reverent and attentive. A good many of them carried flowers. One boy in the gallery held a sunflower in his hand, and the girls had little bunches of asters on their prayer books, to satisfy, we supposed, the Slovak love of colour. We sat at the back with some girls, who let us look over their

large, much-ornamented prayer books, obviously heirlooms. The volume of sound which burst forth, when the pastor started the singing, was almost awe-inspiring. It was like a great organ. The sound of the organ itself was completely overpowered. All through the service the congregation sang perfectly together, men and women alike, and most harmoniously. Their singing included several of the psalms, which we could follow.

Along the front of the gallery there were hung tinsel wreaths, imitation palm branches, and artificial flowers, to which were tied long white ribbons with silver-lettered memorial inscriptions. These evidently took the place of the stone and brass tablets which are seen on the walls of our churches. The girls wore their hair in plaits, and tied over their heads were handkerchiefs, red or white with a border of roses ; the married women had a comb or a frame underneath, to raise the handkerchief off their necks, making it fall in a diamond shape at the back of their heads. All had kilted skirts, and black aprons richly embroidered, with very gay bodices and waist ribbons. Narrow ribbon streamers of all the colours of the rainbow hung from their waists behind, down to the bottom of their skirts. Necklaces of blue lustre beads or of imitation pearls were much in favour, each girl wearing as many as half a dozen. The men took off their hats as they came in and hung them up on high wooden rails standing near the pews. Some of them had the chalice embroidered in red on the front of their shirts.

At twelve o'clock the service was over, and the people poured out. It was nothing short of marvellous to see how quickly they vanished, especially the girls, who had to get into their ordinary clothes to prepare the midday dinner. We soon found the streets empty, so we went to the Goldstein Hostinec for our meal. The children had not come to the church though they had said they would, and we were not sorry. Probably their parents had not allowed it. We were given soup, then very tough beef and potatoes, finishing up with a

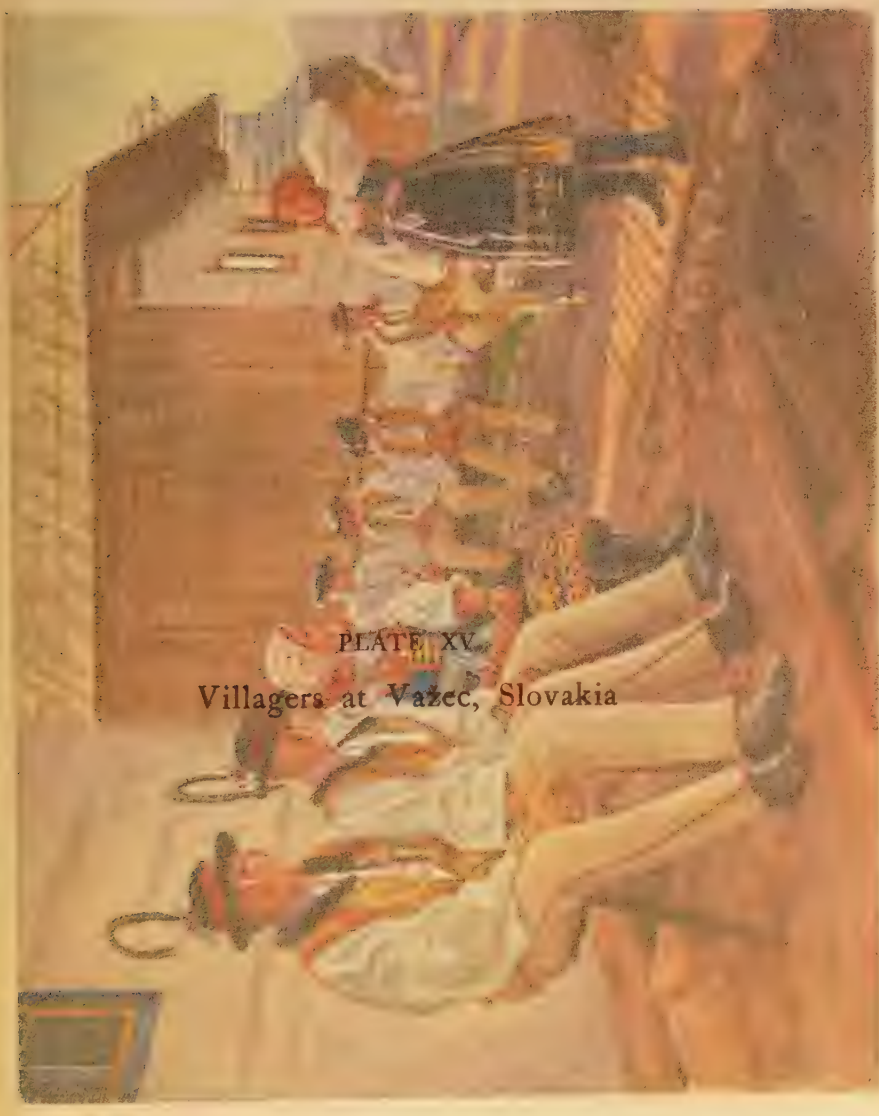

PLATE XV

Villagers at Važec, Slovakia

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kind of sponge cake, which was the best part of the meal. The little girl of twelve showed us her Latin-Slovak exercise-book, for she was learning Latin at the school at Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš. On the walls of the room there hung a large oil-painting of the two children in Slovak costume, though the mother took great pains to make it clear that they only wore it for fancy dress.

"We are not peasants," she said proudly; "we are Jews."

As soon as our meal was over I went back to the main village street, where I hoped to get a girl to sit for me, but they were all still indoors, clearing up after dinner. Four young men were sitting in a row on a bench outside a house, so I proposed to sketch them, at which they were amused, but not at all displeased. They fetched me a chair from one of the houses to put my things on. Number four, who was farthest away, soon saw I was not needing him at the moment and came behind to watch; number three followed suit, then number two; but number one, the patient "Ondrej," stuck to his post. Soon a great crowd collected, men and women and girls, gaily dressed, looking like a scene in an opera.

My friend had gone to the railway station to fetch something from our luggage. Before starting she had said, "How shall I find you again?" I had replied, "I don't think there'll be much difficulty. Look for a crowd, and you will find me in the middle!"

For I knew the villagers by this time.

Presently there came a burst of laughter, and, looking down the street, I saw the black cloth and tripod stand of a photographer, preparing to photograph the whole crowd. Apparently they thought as far as I was concerned that it was a case of "the biter bit." The photographer drew near, and asked if he might take a photograph from where Ondrej was sitting. He said he was Czech, and a painter himself, although he took photographs as well. Of course I gave him leave, and he promised to send me a copy, which he afterwards did. Before I finished my sketch, number two was persuaded to return to his post, and a girl came and joined the two boys

on the bench, while another stood and chaffed her for sitting with them.

When I was putting up my things, another young man demanded in a fierce and threatening voice to have his portrait painted, offering to pay what I liked. The fierceness was plainly all due to self-consciousness, and the effort it cost him to make the request. Unfortunately we had to hurry off to catch our train.

We took leave of the friendly crowd, shaking hands with a good few of them, for they pressed forward with smiling faces to wish us good speed. On the way to the station we passed a cottage with many newspapers spread on the ground outside, and something black scattered over the papers, evidently put out to dry. A Magyar woman stood in charge. She told us they were little bits of mushroom being dried for flavouring soup.

. . . . . .

It is only a short journey from Važec to Štrbské Pleso, our next stopping-place ; and already, as we walked to the station, we could see the white hotel buildings, about 1500 feet higher than Važec, Kriváň towering above them, and the other peaks of High Tatra ranging farther east.

Fig. 3.—Going Home from Church.

38. THE VILLAGE OF SLAVKOV

CHAPTER XVIII

OUR first attempt to see High Tatra had been made in the month of May, and we had learnt by experience why it is that most of the high hotels are closed until June 1st. We stayed then at Poprad, a very dull little "Zips" town on the level plateau, but it is the starting-place for trams to Smokovec, Lomnica, and Štrbské Pleso, and it has a beautiful distant view of the mountains.

From Poprad we took the tram to Starý Smokovec, and from there hoped to make an excursion into the mountains, following the tourist marks. We started hopefully towards Sliezský Dům, at the foot of Slavkovský, through the pine woods; but under the trees the snow still lay deep, even along the paths, and yet it was so soft that we could not walk on it without sinking in. We struggled on for some distance, with the snow getting deeper, till we sank nearly up to our knees. Then we found that we were making such little headway that we turned back. On the way home we stopped an hour or two at the village of Slavkov, half-way between Smokovec and Poprad. It is very sketchable, with its wooden houses, and wide, rushing stream, flanked by an old mill, and with the grand background of High Tatra, all blue and silver under the snow. The stream rushes to join the Poprad, and so into the Vistula, on its way to the Baltic. The village is peopled by Germans, despite its Slav name. Every little girl said, "Guten Tag," to us, and every little boy cracked a whip, to tease the little girls. When we left, the herds of cattle were being driven home for the night across the plains below High Tatra, a picture of village life we never tired of seeing.

And now we were on our way to Štrbské Pleso in September, with no fear of being hampered by snow. After changing on to the mountain railway at Štrba, we went to stand outside on the platform by the driver, for it was a glorious evening, and all the windows of the carriage had been carefully closed. I asked the driver which hotels were still open. He told us that the Hviedoslav was shut, but the Kriváň was open, and it was all under the same management; the Kriváň remained open till October 1st. Then he said: "You use the *Czech* names for the months; the *Slovak* names are different. In Czech it is Září, Říjen, Listopad; in Slovak we say September, Oktober, November." I was rather amused at his correction, for in this case it would have been so much easier for me to speak Slovak! All the same I am sorry if the Slovaks have dropped the delightfully poetic names in the Czech calendar; so much better than the meaningless names of pagan gods and goddesses, or mere numerals, such as we use. What name could be more suitable for November than Listopad, "Fall o' the Leaf"? Or for May, than Květen, "Blossoming"? And all through the calendar this appropriateness runs, beginning with January, the month of Ice, and February, the month of Tears, or Thawing.

Meanwhile we were twisting up and up towards the mountains, sometimes with pine trees shutting out the view, sometimes with the wide vista of the plateau spread out below us, and Nízké Tatry rising to the south. The little village of Važec was clearly visible with its white houses and churches. And ahead there opened out a grand view of the giants of the Carpathians.

The southern shore of Štrbské Pleso (which means "The Štrba Lake"), is rather spoiled by the hotels, villas and other buildings crowded together just where the railway ends, but the views from the hotel windows are magnificent, back and front, and a very few minutes' walk takes one away from sight or sound of anything but natural

PLATE XVI

Štrbské Pleso, High Tatra, Slovakia

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beauty. The Lake lies at a level of nearly 4500 feet above the sea, but is beautifully sheltered from the cold north winds.

On arriving, we were given two rooms, both with magnificent views, but in exactly opposite directions; one, northward, over the Lake to High Tatra, and the other, southward, across the vast plateau to Low Tatra. I went straight to my balcony, the view from which is seen in Plate XVI. The two nearest heights shown are Solisko and Patria, both more than 7000 feet high.

Building operations were being carried on busily close by the Lake, and in watching the bricklayers empty a railway truck of bricks we were struck by the embroidered coats of the workmen, worn on such rough work. Here was one with blue and red embroidery and alternate red and blue buttons all down the front; and there was another with most elaborate floral designs up the back.

We were very fortunate during our short stay in having a great variety of weather, but all of it *good*, for it enabled us to see the Tatras at their very best, whether beneath a clear blue sky, or with brilliant ever-changing cloud effects, or in the quieter beauty of a grey day.

It was quite the end of the season; but it would be difficult to imagine a more beautiful time of the year for being there. Hardly a leaf had fallen, and the mountain-ash trees, which grow freely, were flaming in scarlet and gold. There were still many lovely wild flowers, especially brilliant blue gentian, growing about a foot high, whose leaves had turned to gold; and wild raspberries and whortleberries were plentiful beside all the lower paths.

There are four valleys which open up quite close to Štrbské Pleso, all leading to mountain-lakes—"eyes of the sea," as they call them locally—the sources of the rivers Poprad, Mlynica and Furkota; and the valley of the White Váh is very little farther. One of the most beautiful walks is to the Poprad Lake, which can be reached in an hour. Žabí Lake is

an example of the wilder sort, lying just under Mengusovský Štít, at a height of over 6000 feet.

The Tourist Club notices are very helpful in giving the directions for climbing the principal heights, with the approximate time necessary for each climb.

Every mountain-lover knows the infinite variety of walks and climbs offered by regions such as these ; and the changing aspect of the mountains makes them never seem the same, even if we follow the same path twice.

We left Štrbské Pleso regretfully, promising ourselves another visit at the same time of year, and making our way by train to Levoča.

We arrived there well within daylight, so we were able to see the town far ahead, standing on its hill, with a higher hill beyond crowned with a pilgrim church, and High Tatra rising in the distance. We asked about a conveyance, for the station is outside the town. The only one obtainable already contained two full-sized parents and a child, but they readily made room for us on the back seat (it was a kind of victoria), and for our luggage on the box.

Never did I come across such bumpy roads ! We clung together on our narrow seat to avoid being thrown out, for we seemed to surmount obstacles of great size and to come down with a crash on the other side. Levoča is a picturesque old town, still partly surrounded by its ancient walls, and has often been called " the Slovak Nuremberg," because of its character. It was the capital of the sixteen free Zips towns founded by Saxon immigrants in the twelfth century. Its chief beauties are the thirteenth-century Gothic church, which is quite a museum of mediæval art, and the Gothic town hall with beautiful arcades. These two stand close together on the central square.

We went straight to the Hotel Tatra, where we were received by the proprietor's wife, young and bright and charming, in a light cotton frock. We took to the hotel at once, and it did not disappoint us.

PLATE XVII

The Church and Town Hall, Levoča, Slovakia

an example of the wilder sort, lying just under Mengusovský Štít, at a height of over 6000 feet.

The Tourist Club notices are very helpful in giving the directions for climbing the principal heights, with the approximate time necessary for each climb.

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J. Mathersole

There was a definite attempt at a scheme of decoration, which is not usual in these provincial hotels. The wide staircase, all in red and white, was decorated with the fresh green trails of tradescantia, growing in pots. At supper the proprietor himself, in a white jacket, waited on us. The other guests seemed to be all residents.

One thing that amused us was a large portrait of Krüger in a high hat, which appeared to have been left behind by a former generation of hotel-keepers. The entrance to the kitchen was on the way from the front door to the chief staircase, and the buxom cook liked to come out and talk to us as we passed, and was delighted when we praised her cooking. They told us that the eighty English visitors who stayed at Štrbské Pleso in August had come over here for the day. Cook and proprietress seemed on excellent terms ; and when I said, " I have not yet seen the chamber-maid," the proprietress smiled, and said, " It is I."

We wandered about the town that evening, and were up early the next morning to see the church, for we knew by experience that churches in this country often close for the day at 9.30 a.m. A Magyar custodian showed us over. There is much very beautiful carved and gilded work, carried out by " Mistr Pavel," a native of Levoča who studied in Nuremberg. Twenty assistants helped him. The high altar, 60 feet high, is part of his work, all of wood elaborately carved and gilded, the gold remaining as fresh as when it was first put on. On the walls are frescoes of the fourteenth century, and the beautiful bronze font is of the same period.

Above the entrance to the Chapel of St George is a well-preserved fresco, dated 1515, representing Christ with St John and the Virgin.

We were shown over the town hall by an enthusiast from whom we found it hard to get away when we had seen enough, for he wanted us to examine separately every relic in the museum. The great hall is decorated with crystal lamps, the gift of the town of Venice in the

sixteenth century, and hung round with portraits of past celebrities.

They told us that the town was partly burnt down several years ago ; wind blew the fire up the street to the church, and part of the tower was then destroyed. This accounts for its unfinished appearance.

CHAPTER XIX

FROM Levoča we planned to go on to Jasiňa, the easternmost station on the Czechoslovak railway, near the Polish frontier of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia and 530 miles from Prague.

Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, or Podkarpatská Rus, is a part of the world of which few had ever heard before the Great War, for indeed it only existed as an unimportant little corner of north-east Hungary. The Ruthenians were always there, but no one troubled about them. They were one of the subject races of Hungary, off the beaten track, in more senses than one ; without political rights, and almost without education ; nine out of every ten persons could not read or write. Considerably more than half of the inhabitants are Ruthenes, of Russian stock, and speaking various dialects akin to Russian. The rest are Magyars, Germans and Jews.

Under the Magyars, the Ruthenes all belonged to the Uniate Church, which is under the authority of Rome, but follows the Greek rite. The Slav liturgy has been preserved, although latterly the Magyars endeavoured to force upon the people a Magyar liturgy, meeting with great opposition. Since the revolution many of the Ruthenes have shown a desire to return to the Orthodox Church.

It was on the direct request of leading Ruthenes in Europe and America, representing the interests of this small branch of the Slav race, that Ruthenia was included in the Czechoslovak Republic, on the understanding that she should have her own Diet, to legislate on domestic affairs.

In March 1924 the first elections for the National Assembly were held, with the result that the Communists obtained more than 50 per cent. of the votes ; perhaps hardly surprising, with

such an uneducated electorate. Handicapped as they have been in their own country, without education, without convenient means of communication, and unable to win a sufficient living from the soil, the people have emigrated to America to the number of four hundred thousand, so that there are almost as many of them on that side of the Atlantic as on this. Not a few have prospered greatly under the more favourable conditions of the New World.

This neglected little land suffered much during the Great War. It was a battleground for the opposing Austrian and Russian forces, and the retreating armies left behind them disease and famine. When peace at last came, conditions in Ruthenia could hardly have been worse. It is well known how the Red Cross workers came to the rescue, helped by American and English friends; how they fed many thousands daily, provided much-needed clothing, and cared for the orphans and deserted children. Up till 1922 the chief work to be done lay in this direction; Ruthenia's welcome into the Republic had to be expressed in soup, cocoa and biscuits. Even to-day children are still being fed, and orphans housed; and small boys are being sent as apprentices to Bohemia and Moravia, to learn farming or a trade, that they may return to raise the standard of efficiency in their own country.

Since peace was signed, the Czechoslovak Red Cross, under the presidency of Miss Alice Masaryk, has become far-reaching in its methods and aims. It has directed its efforts not only towards better sanitation, food and clothing, but also towards social reform generally, and international friendship, with the view of averting the chances of war; and it has become one of the best-known organizations of the country; certainly the best known in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia.

Over three hundred thousand school children, of whom at least nine thousand are Ruthenians, are now organized in its junior section. The aim is to train the children to work together in groups, with the motto, "Love and Labour for Humanity." They are taught to have a social conscience, and

39. THE "CROWN INN," JASINA

to see that unselfishness and self-respect alike demand from them a high standard, not only of good conduct, but also of personal cleanliness. The children readily respond to this teaching.

The school class is the basis of each group. At least half of the members of a class must be ready to enrol themselves, before the class as a whole can be affiliated as a " class-unit." Then each class elects its own secretary and treasurer, and chooses what kind of work it will do. Perfect freedom of choice is allowed and originality is encouraged, but it must be something in the way of disinterested helpfulness. There is no doubt that the example of loving service shown by the Red Cross workers themselves is a valuable part of the training.

. . . . . .

Schools have been established as rapidly as possible in Ruthenia to make up for the deficiencies of the past. Over three hundred elementary schools have been started, and the adult illiterates are also being taken in hand. The task presents great difficulties, for the language was not standardized, and includes many differing dialects. Czech teachers have to come and grapple with these problems, and bravely they are doing it, learning the language first themselves before they can teach the children.

With the absence of books, folk tales and legends have remained very popular, and are used to beguile the winter evenings. The women make beautiful embroidery ; the men in some parts are clever at wood-carving, or at pottery. They claim that Solomon taught the first Ruthenian potters ! The craft was certainly carried on before the arrival of the Magyars in Central Europe, one thousand years ago ; it is quite different from the Slovak pottery, more like that of the Ukraine.

Wonders have been accomplished in Ruthenia in the last five years, not only in education, but in the making of roads and bridges and in the building of houses, to supplant the one-roomed hovels of the poorest peasants.

The backward state of the peasants is the greatest obstacle

to progress. Many of them do not want to be disturbed in their old habits and customs, and resent the introduction of "improvements." In a village between Akna Slatina and Rahovo they have dug a great pit right across the road, to prevent a good modern road, suitable for motor-cars, from being continued. They say, "We do not want your good roads; and as for your motor-cars, they frighten our cattle, send dust into our eyes, and disturb our peace. The land in this village is ours, and we refuse to sell it at any price whatever."

But this was just the attitude of English country-folk when trains were first introduced, so probably only patience is necessary.

Alcoholism has done much to degrade the people, and this is being fought strenuously. To the lack of sufficient food has been added the evil of drinking methylated spirits. The people need the spirits for their cooking, so the authorities now insist that it shall be sold only mixed with a blue dye, and it will be a punishable offence to have blue lips.

The best type of Ruthenians are those that live up the valley of the Black Tisa, in the neighbourhood of Jasiňa. They are free from the vice of alcoholism, and are a fine race. I shall have more to say of them in the next chapter.

Our first visit to Ruthenia was in the spring. Užhorod, the capital, lies in the fertile plains, on the river Uh, which goes to swell the Tisa. The train which brought us there follows the beautiful valley of the Hernad from Spišska Nová Ves to Košice. There we alighted to see the cathedral, the best example of Gothic architecture in Slovakia. It was begun in the thirteenth century from the designs of a Picard architect, Villars d'Honnecourt, and finished in 1382—a beautiful building, and yet the whole effect disappointed us. It is difficult to say why. Perhaps it was because the restorations of the eighteenth century made it look too new, or because the pattern of the coloured glazed tiles on the roof seemed to attract too much attention. The dedication is to St Elizabeth of Hungary; and my memory capriciously recalls from the beautifully sculptured figures near the south door one little group, in which

the mediæval artist has given play to his sense of humour. St Elizabeth is feeding the poor. A beggar woman is seated on the recumbent figure of a man; she has her mouth wide open, and the saint is charitably occupied in putting a whole sausage into it!

Inside the cathedral we saw many peasant girls, with such voluminous petticoats that they had great difficulty in sitting down. In some villages they boast as many as sixteen or seventeen petticoats, and they look askance at the slim figures of the girls who wear ordinary dress.

. . . . . .

We had to change at Čop for Užhorod, and to follow a line running north up the Uh valley. There were great spring floods nearly all the way to Čop, and many little farms had been turned into islands. Wide rolling fields of wheat, all one brilliant green, instead of the "striped-carpet" effect, marked the absence of small peasant properties. Before the war one Count alone owned 880 square miles in Ruthenia.

From Užhorod station it is a long drive to the centre of the town, crossing the river on the way, and the driver made us pay a long price. On that spring day lilac and other flowering shrubs glorified the streets of the otherwise plain little town. We noticed many Jews, with long side-curls, at the shop-doors and in the crowds. The street-notices are written in Magyar, Russian, Czech and Hebrew, and all these tongues can be heard.

The hotel was only passably good, and the porter looked like a ruffianly tramp, partly because he had not shaved for several days. The Roumanian waiter who served us spoke Magyar, Slovak and Russian besides his own language, but hardly any German. However, he introduced *bitte schön* every few words, with the idea that somehow it would help.

The next day we had the opportunity of seeing the peasants' costumes, for it was a feast-day, and crowds came in from the villages. The old porter knocked at our bedroom doors at five o'clock in the morning, shouting, "Warty." He had actually

got hold of an English word; but he had also got hold of the wrong idea that we wanted to catch the five-thirty train! And he did not bring us any hot water; he was under the impression that "Warty" meant "Get up!"

While we had our breakfast we could watch the peasants in the streets, for the coffee-room was like a glass house. The dresses were different from any we had yet seen. The girls wore long, full, kilted skirts, with trimming round the bottom, and very short aprons, also very full, of a bright contrasting colour. Pea green and rose pink were a favourite combination, or blue and orange. Bright flowered shawls were worn over light bodices. The people sang as they paced the streets.

We found our way to the castle, which is now used partly as a seminary and partly for Government offices. An official kindly showed us round, taking us through the garden, on to an old bastion, from which there was a beautiful view of the river, in its spring setting of brilliant green grass and trees. He showed us also the chapel, very richly ornamented in the Greek Church style, with a canopy on golden pillars, a golden pulpit with coloured medallions of saints, and rich deep colouring on walls and ceiling, without a trace of tawdriness.

Another day we went by train up the river to Nevické Podhorodie, where the Empress Maria Theresa used to stay. It is a beautiful spot, hidden in the woods, by the open bank of the river which is crossed just here by a long wooden bridge. The castle on the top of a tree-covered hill is only a ruin. The gardens must have been beautifully laid out in the days of the Empress; now they were all desolation, left to the moles and the bats. The roses and fruit trees had run wild, the round pond was overgrown with weeds; an overturned obelisk, with an inscription in Magyar, lay across what had once been a path. Only an avenue of great yew trees had kept their stateliness. There were little restaurant tables under a group of trees. Evidently it is a pleasure resort for the people of Užhorod on Sundays, but on a week-day we saw only a few peasant children playing on the bridge.

40. A GIRL AT UZHOROD

We spent several days sketching in the neighbourhood of Užhorod, providing a puzzle for the inhabitants, who could not imagine why two Englishwomen (or any one else) should come to the town except on business. The country all round is flat, but the river-scenes were lovely, with curious old mills on the tributary streams, overhung by blossoming fruit trees, and the mountains in the north near enough to be effective. We wandered wherever we pleased, without let or hindrance.

CHAPTER XX

JASIŇA is the home of a special race known as the Huculs, large-scale photographs of some of whom, in gala dress, hang at the chief railway stations of Czechoslovakia, to entice the traveller. We studied the time-table and found that it would be possible to have a long day there and to sandwich it in between two nights spent in the train, for we could not trust to getting sleeping accommodation in this remote village. There are no sleeping berths to be had in the trains to Jasiňa ; they are slow trains, chiefly for the use of the local travellers.

We left Levoča at six o'clock in the evening to take the train for Spišská Nová Ves, where we had to change for Jasiňa. The hotel-keeper and his charming little wife took leave of us like old friends ; in fact the whole establishment came out to see us off and to shake hands through the carriage-window. Everything was glowing in the beautiful evening light as we drove to the station. The sun gleamed on the ancient walls with their octagonal towers, and on the fruit trees growing thickly in the deep moat, and now covered with tempting pears and apples.

At the booking-office of Spišská Nová Ves I paid for a ticket with a 500-crown note. The clerk, a middle-aged woman, handed me the ticket with the change.

Then suddenly to my astonishment she threw the 500-crown note back to me, crying excitedly :

" It is not good ! it is not good ! "

I did not know what she meant, but I picked it up, and went back to the restaurant, quite forgetting that I had now got the ticket and the change *and* the note. I asked the head-waiter what was the matter, while the cries of the clerk became

PLATE XVIII

Jasiña, Ruthenia

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louder than ever. Before the waiter could reply several travellers from other tables came forward to see if they could help. They spoke a variety of languages, but *not* English. They sat in solemn conclave over the note, and they found it guilty ; and why ? Because there was a hole in it the size of a pin's head which had been burned in it by ash from a cigarette. They said any bank would cash it for me if I paid two crowns (about 3d.) on account of the hole, but no one else would care to take it. So we produced another note and pacified the clerk.

I have often marvelled at the patience and clear-headedness of the booking-clerks in this country, where they never know what language is going to be hurled at them, and where they need to be very quick in understanding what is wanted, with a long queue of applicants waiting to be served. In buying scores of tickets, I have almost invariably met with courtesy.

We supplied ourselves with grapes, pears and apples for the journey, also rolls and chocolate ; and started for Jasiňa at twenty minutes to nine, sleeping in our seats till we reached Kiral'háza, where we had to change at about half-past two. Here we booked nearly all our luggage, keeping little beyond the food and my sketching things. The reckoning of time changes at Kiral'háza, so though we reached there at 2.38 and only waited ten minutes, the time-table said we left at 3.48. However we picked up our lost hour again on the following night in making the return journey.

At 5.17 we reached Terešva, where the guard came and told us we must change into another part of the same train, because it was the Roumanian frontier. He said something else very quickly, which I did not at first understand, at which he exclaimed :

" I speak five languages (Slovak, Roumanian, Magyar, Russian, Polish) ; surely the *panička* can understand *one* of them ? "

The peasants, as well as guards, porters and servants

nearly always used this form of address. *Panička* is the diminutive of *paní*, lady. All Slavs delight in diminutives.

We found he only wanted to tell us that customs examinations were not necessary if we did not alight from the train in Roumania. The train runs through Roumanian territory for 37 kilometres (about 22 miles), and it took us exactly two hours and eight minutes to do this part of the journey! This narrow little strip of the left bank of the Tisa was assigned to Roumania under the Peace Treaty, as a concession to her desire for access to the river; but it is very inconvenient for everybody. The four Czechoslovak trains which run through daily are watched all the way by Roumanian sentries, who board the carriages and stand on the footboards to guard the doors, and who are also on duty at every railway station, lest passengers booked through to Czechoslovak territory should alight here and so evade the customs.

The train had been made as short as possible, so the passengers were now crowded together. We preferred the fresh air in the corridor, and there we sat and had our simple breakfast of coffee from a thermos, rolls and fruit.

Day dawned as we entered Roumania, with a pure golden sky, and flocks of fleecy rose-coloured clouds. Distant mountains stood out clearly, purple upon gold. I cannot pretend that we could distinguish by the landscape or the costumes any difference between Roumania and Czechoslovakia! But we could trace by a line of curious posts the frontier, drawn arbitrarily through what was formerly all Ruthenia. The sentires on guard obviously did not belong to Czechoslovakia. Their uniform was too picturesque and careless. They wore generally soft grey felt hats with pheasants' quills, khaki coats and puttees, and breeches of a rather light blue.

The wooden roofs of the houses are steeper in this part of the country than farther west. The crops in the fields are chiefly Indian corn and sunflowers. The oil pressed from sunflower seeds is sometimes the only fat the Ruthenian

peasants can obtain; and on fast-days of the Uniate Church animal fat is forbidden.

Sometimes we would see a field of tall sunflowers, and on the ground beneath them great green or golden marrows, peering from the midst of their trailing leaves. We noticed a little whitewashed cottage with bright gold cobs of Indian corn hung out to dry on its walls so as almost to hide them from view.

Peasants kept getting in and out of the third-class carriages. Some of them wore very flat straw hats, with long ends of white or coloured ribbon hanging down behind. In shape they were like exaggerated versions of the straw hats of Harrow boys. Wide white cotton trousers and sheepskin coats were still the rule, and the hair was often worn long, curling round at the ends. One man had a beautiful white leather waistcoat, appliquéd with red.

We were keeping close to the river Tisa all the way, as we rose higher and higher. Haycocks stood in the fields, filling the morning air with fragrance. They were built up on dead fir-tree foundations as in Slovakia, but were higher and more pointed. Piles of red apples lay in the orchards, waiting to be carted, and hops and climbing beans were trained up poles close to the houses. Sometimes we passed through lovely forests of oak, beech and plane, with a sprinkling of firs, the green river flowing deep down between the tree-covered banks. On it were the inevitable rafts, finding many rapids to shoot on their way downstream.

The trees were often hung with long trails of the wild clematis, or smothered with its masses of fluffy grey seed-vessels (" old man's beard ").

At last at Trebuša we recrossed the frontier, and then the line turned northwards to find and follow the narrow valley of the Black Tisa. Wisps of clouds began to be caught in the trees as we still continued to climb. At Rahovo the valley widens out, making room for a pastoral village where the district authorities live. Here standard roses, and many-coloured

dahlias were blooming freely in the little station garden, while crowds of peasants, like living flowers, in gorgeous dresses, passed in and out of the train. Reds, browns and burnt siennas, with touches of bright yellow and green, were the prevalent colours. Shirts and waistcoats were nearly all embroidered beautifully with coloured wools. One woman had on her head a flame-coloured kerchief, with a brilliant border of reds, blues and greens. Nearly every woman carried a stout cloth bag, all of exactly the same pattern—a brown and yellow and white check. It seemed to be "the latest thing" in shopping-bags, though more probably it was an ancient tradition still carried on. Foresters in picturesque light green uniforms moved in and out of the crowd. And here was a young (English ?) man, accompanied by a game-keeper, both carrying guns.

Beyond Rahovo the valley narrows again; it is still most beautiful, with wooded hills shutting us in on either side, the trees aflame with gorgeous autumn colours.

At Bilin nad Tisou there is a lovely little wooden church, typical of the country, the logs of the walls a rich red-brown with age, but the tower apparently newly built and quite light in colour; the roof of grey slats. Round it was a very wide verandah-roof, about 10 feet from the ground. Little children ran out of the houses to wave at the train, as children will do everywhere. Even at this height the cottage gardens were gay with asters and French marigolds, and had apple trees laden with fruit. We saw one tree absolutely covered with the large grey crows, with black wings, which are common throughout the country. There must have been apples underneath, but we could not see them.

Thick sheaves of Indian corn straw, standing on end, were used for fences in this village.

The river was now too shallow and rocky for rafts. At one place men were busy mending breaches in its stone embankment, where heavy rains and swollen streams had broken it away. Just before reaching Tisaborkut we entered a great

41. A RUTHENIAN WOMAN, JASINA

mass of cloud which blotted out everything—hills, river, trees. This was an ill omen for our day at Jasiňa. Should we find it buried in a cloud? But no; as the sun rose higher, and we continued to rise also, we came out into brilliant sunshine right above the clouds.

The last picture I remember as we came out into the broad valley where Jasiňa lies is that of a woman spinning black sheep's wool with a distaff, while she minded the flock on the hillside. She wore the usual Ruthenian woman's dress. The skirt consists of two lengths of native cloth, hung, one in front and one behind, over a long, white linen smock, so as completely to hide the smock except in walking. The cloth is in narrow stripes of red and brown, or red and brown and yellow, with the stripes running across the width. A sheepskin waistcoat, like the men's, embroidered with red, hung with red tassels and trimmed with black sheep's wool, and a red handkerchief over the head, make up the rest of the ordinary costume. The feet and legs are sometimes bare, but more often they have very rough cloth shoes, sewn together with thin strips of leather, and a kind of rough puttees, made of strips of red and natural-coloured or black woollen stuff wound round the leg.

After travelling so long between the steep wooded banks of the river, to come out into the wide amphitheatre of Jasiňa is like emerging from a tunnel into broad daylight. Here our horizon is no longer limited by the river banks, but far away before us, as far as the eye can reach, are the rolling slopes of the Carpathians. The river is still there, twisting like a serpent below us, but its banks are flat, and scattered thickly with houses. Every hillside has its houses also. Jasiňa is called a village, and it looks hardly more, but it comprises, it is said, sixteen thousand inhabitants.

We are so high up here that the mountains do not give nearly such an impression of grandeur as is given by the Tatras, from the plains below them. It is a case of not being able to

see the wood for the trees. We are too much a part of the Carpathians to see them to full advantage.

It was not much after eight o'clock when at last the train drew up at the station. Although we had had an early breakfast we still felt hungry, so our first step was to inquire of some Czech-speaking railway officials, in immaculate uniforms, as to where we could get a meal. They advised us to go to the restaurant at the station, as it was better than the one in the village. At the same time they told us there was no inn where we could sleep.

We had some difficulty in getting into the station restaurant, because all the doors from the platform were locked. At last we found a way in at the back, through a sort of kitchen where all the cooking was done. The young restaurant-keeper and his wife and babies were all there, and he was busy in one corner washing himself at a basin with a tap over it. However, they beckoned us in, and allowed us to have our turn at the tap afterwards while our breakfast was being prepared. The hot coffee and rolls were very acceptable, and we asked if we could return for midday dinner. Oh no, they were only there when trains were arriving or leaving. The man had been in Tripoli during the war, and had learned a little Italian, which he was delighted to speak. They were very kind to us, and most anxious to do all they could.

We went on down into the village, visiting a little church on the way, where one woman with a fine earnest face was kneeling; then up the long street, with beautiful big trees growing in the middle, and indeed already their shade was acceptable. A ditch ran along under the trees, to carry off surplus water, but after a spell of sunny weather it was now quite dry. We stopped to watch a picturesque group in the meadow beside the road, close to a low house which called itself the " Hostinec Koruna " (Crown Inn).

There was a young man in strange dress, with a herd of wonderful, shaggy, young pigs, and three women in the red-and-white-and-brown colouring of the neighbourhood were talking

42. THE MERRY SWINE-HERD, JASINA

to him. To my surprise the young man turned and addressed me in Italian. " Come stà, signora ? Bene ? " He was very inclined to be conversational, and told us he had been for some years in Italy, as a prisoner during the war, with a serious wound in the face. For two and a half years of that time he was in Sicily, where he was very hungry because bread became so scarce. He pattered away, partly in Italian and partly in Slovak ; a very merry fellow, who seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself in Jasiňa, looking after his pigs. Vasíly Siliman was his name, and his home was in " Siliša "—so he wrote it in my sketch-book—but the Czech for *Silesia* is Slezsko, and I could find no " Siliša " in any map. I suppose his dress was typical of that part, wherever it may be. It consisted of a funny high-crowned yellow straw hat ; a white linen combination-garment, shirt and long full trousers all in one, embroidered with white ; and a short white coat of coarse woollen cloth, faced with red. He shook out his skirts, and danced a *pas seul*, singing, as he did so, " I haven't been home for thirty days ! I haven't been home for thirty days ! " Two friends joined him, dressed in the ordinary Hucul fashion. The white shirt, embroidered in colours round neck and sleeves, is worn outside the trousers like a tunic, with a leather belt round the hips. The sheepskin waistcoat has gorgeous tassels of scarlet or emerald, as well as shaggy black borders. The trousers are generally black, quite close-fitting, and strips of brilliant colour are often twisted round the ankles. It looks strange to see the white tunic showing below both coat and waistcoat. One of these friends had been through the war, and had come out a cripple with two crutches, but except when he walked he still gave the impression of being an athlete, and had a very alert and vigorous expression.

Shortly afterwards we came across him again, sitting with two other men on a bench in the village street, and they willingly consented to sit for me. A crowd gathered round as usual ; but they gave me no trouble, and kept each other beautifully in order. When I had finished (as much as possible, with

three such lively sitters), a young man who was evidently the dandy of the place came and asked me to paint him. He was tall and lumpish with a very comic pink face, a remarkably high felt hat, and a gay embroidered waistcoat. But the striking thing about him was his trousers, which were dull yellow inside the legs, and black outside, making him look like a clown. I was sorry I could not begin another sketch, for he was really a prize; but we wanted to see more of the village.

We crossed the river by a wooden bridge, and went to sit in the shade of some churchyard trees to eat the lunch we had with us. Then we climbed a hill at the north end of the village, and I made a sketch looking backwards along the serpentine river. An old woman was climbing the hill too, and while she stopped to take breath (see Plate XLI) she began talking to us. She pointed out the little wooden cottage where she lived, and told us she had ten children and thirty grandchildren, counting them off on her fingers. She wanted to know whether we were married, and how we managed to travel without any men. These were questions we were always being asked, evidently the chief subject of interest to the peasant mind. A third which often followed was: "Are your parents still alive?"

Women and girls were busy hoeing potatoes on the hill. We noticed no men at all working in the fields. The three who sat to me were only three out of many men who seemed to be taking it easily. A small boy who was minding sheep came and watched me, and tried to open a refractory paint-tube with which he found me struggling. When the sun dropped down behind the hills, we went to a Czech restaurant for tea, a poor bare place, with very little to offer in the way of food, but there were some rather nice water-colours on the walls, done in the immediate neighbourhood by a local artist. At a little distance north of the village there is one of the typical wooden churches, with a detached bell-tower. Church and tower both had the projecting eaves or verandah such as we

PLATE XIX

Three Jaúña Worthies, Ruthenia

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noticed at Bilin nad Tisou; wide enough to shelter a small crowd in a storm. The campanile was square, up to a point above the verandah, and then became octagonal. The plan of these churches seems to suggest Byzantine influence. They are usually in the form of a Greek cross, but instead of a central dome there is a central tower, hexagonal or octagonal, the roof tapering to a point. There are other types, but this, as at Jasiňa, is the best and purest.

We walked back with leisurely steps along the interminable village street to the station. Seeing picture post cards exhibited in several of the strange little shops we tried to buy some of them, but there were none for sale. Those in the windows had evidently been there for years, they were so faded and dirty, and nobody had any stock in the background. This shows the poverty of Jasiňa, and how far removed it is from the track of tourists. There were shops full of hideous "Western" clothes, and there were far too many of these being worn; but on the whole the people appeared in the picturesque dress I have described. Of aprons, which are so rich and varied in Moravia and Slovakia, I did not see a single example on the hundreds of women and girls whom we met in the streets and the fields. They all wore only the Ruthenian skirt. We brought away a very clear impression of the village and its people, although in the short time at our disposal it could be only an impression.

Our friends at the station restaurant gave us hot milk and bread and sausage for supper, and there we sat till nine o'clock until the train came to fetch us. The guard labelled a "Ladies'" carriage for us, in which we slept comfortably, right down the valley of the Black Tisa and through the strip of Roumania, awaking only to pick up our luggage at Kiral'haza.

We came straight back to Žilina, where we had already stayed more than once in the spring. That evening at dinner the waiter beamed on us and said, "I saw you on Wednesday." We were rather surprised, because we

had spent that day at Levoča, more than one hundred miles away. Then he went on, "My sister is the wife of the hotel proprietor there." "What, that charming little woman?" said we. And after that he was more attentive than ever.

CHAPTER XXI

ŽILINA is a capital centre for exploring the "Považí" district of Slovakia, which, being interpreted, means the district "on the Váh."

The river Váh rises in the Tatra Mountains, flowing first westwards to Žilina and then southwards to join the Danube near Komárno.

Even as seen from the railway between Bratislava and Žilina, and on towards High Tatra, the beauty of the Váh valley, with its many castles, is very striking, and this part of the journey should always be managed by daylight if possible.

Here I must again make a little digression, and go back to the first time we visited Žilina, in the spring.

The railway guide names two hotels, and we chose the Rémi, instead of the "Panský Dom" (Lordly House), because it was so near the station. The first thing that caught our eye was a cheering placard in German and Czech: "Bad im Haus, Koupel v domě." The notice appeared in every available place, pointing evidently to what was considered the chief attraction. But when we asked for the fulfilment of the great hopes that had been raised, the chambermaid looked sad, and led us to a room where there was a *bath*, truly, and it *was* "in the house," but it lay on its side, and was not connected with any water-supply. However, since then the whole place has been enlarged and improved, and the bath had found its feet before we came again.

Žilina itself seemed very unattractive on that first evening. It is surrounded by mountains; but we looked for a trace of these in vain. The thick clouds of smoke, belched forth by the many factories, were unable to get away, and hung low over the town. We wondered if things were always like this,

enveloped in a pall of smoke and cloud ; but the next day, with a change of wind, the sky was clear and beautiful. The Little Tatra peaks, still covered with snow, appeared on the south and east, a vision of blue and silver. They looked all the higher in contrast with the flat green valley where Žilina lies, a valley filled with pools where myriads of frogs hide under the green scum and send up a strange unending chorus of sound.

. . . . . .

It was market-day, and the square, with the usual arcades, was full of movement and colour. Everything imaginable was being bought and sold from the covered stalls spread out in the centre ; and under the arcades could be seen, sitting on the ground, the vendors of produce from the farms and villages. There were geese and ducks peering out of baskets, or being carried under the owner's arm, as Alice in Wonderland carried the flamingo ; there were green heaps of vegetables ; there were the usual flaming sacks of red pepper, in every conceivable shade of orange and scarlet ; there were pigs tied up in bags. The sweet stalls showed confections of colours such as we had never seen for brilliance—crimsons and greens, in true Slovak taste—and even the old village men gathered round them, buying, perhaps, for their grandchildren.

Here was a young Slovak at a boot stall, buying " European " boots. He wore no stockings, but twisted a piece of rag round his foot before fitting on the boot, and from the serious look on his face it was evidently a great occasion.

Farther on was a red-bearded Jew, hung all over with lengths of black and white tape, and crying, " Koruny, koruny, koruny " in a shrill voice. At the cheap-jack stalls, with all sorts of " fancy articles," the seller kept up a cheerful chant of " Po tři koruny ; za tři koruny," to indicate that nothing cost more than three crowns. Farmers were busy at the grain shops buying their seed for the spring sowing. Of the peasants from the more remote villages there were many, usually to be distinguished by their rather lost look, and by the way in which husband and wife clung together instead

43. SLOVAK PEASANTS IN ŽILINA MARKET

of each going off separately. One morning I furtively followed such a couple all round the market. The bag carried by the wife gradually increased in size, but the husband never offered to carry it. Yet he looked a good husband. Such is the invariable custom. The men's hair is long ; their creamy woollen trousers are hooked tight round the ankles, and are elaborately embroidered with curious V-shaped patches of embroidery. Starting from the waist-line the V points downwards towards each leg. In colour it is always scarlet or emerald green. The women are sometimes dressed entirely in coarse white linen, draped over their heads in an almost Oriental fashion, and they generally carry a bundle or bag or basket on their backs.

A timid peasant woman came and asked us to change a dollar sent by her son in America ; but we did not even know the proper exchange, so we sent her to the Bank.

The money sent to their old homes by Czechoslovak emigrants is quite an important factor in the finances of the country, amounting to some £1,300,000 a year !

Amongst the crowd was a typical Slovak shepherd from the hills. He was wandering dreamily through the market when we saw him, his eyes gazing upwards, as if, instead of the busy crowds of buyers and sellers, he still saw the green hillsides, and his sheep cropping the short grass. He evidently did not feel at home in the town, and hardly seemed to know why he had come. In a little leather bag he carried the money he had received for his cheeses, made from the milk of his ewes, and shaped fantastically into hearts and barrels. We bought some of these, at a crown apiece, admiring their brilliant orange colouring and decorative designs, but we did not find them very nice to eat. They were salt and tasteless ; and the orange colour was merely an outside stain.

Early that morning he had walked fifteen miles to the nearest railway station, leaving a boy in charge of the sheep, and longing all the time to be back with them. Stuck in his leather belt was the sharp knife with which he defended himself and his flock if wild animals attacked them. His coarse linen

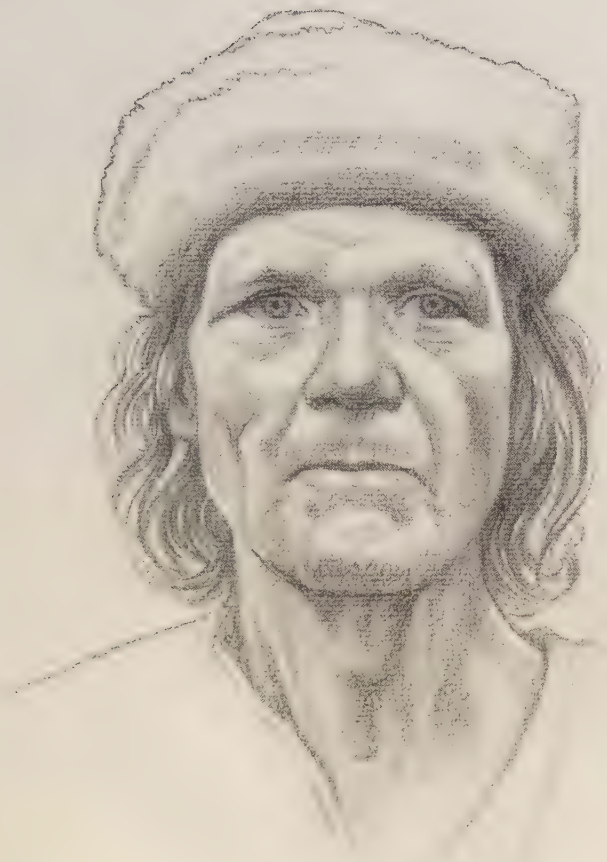
shirt was embroidered with cross-stitch patterns in red and yellow, all down the front, and at neck and wrists and shoulders. His sheep had supplied the wool for his home-woven cloth coat, trousers and shoes, all a creamy white, and also the material for his sheepskin cap. The shoes were sewn up with strips of leather, and fastened on round the ankles with leathern thongs.

As we watched him, we recalled a Slovak song which we had heard : the song of the old shepherd to his sheep, in which he begs them to keep to the gentle slopes, and not to climb too high, because no longer can he nimbly follow them, as in the days when he was young.

. . . . . .

The twin castles of Strečno and Starý Hrad can best be visited from Žilina, and we spent several days in their beautiful neighbourhood. It is easy to reach the little village of Strečno by an early train which arrives just after seven o'clock ; then from the platform the castle can be seen, rising proudly on the other side of the river. We knew nothing of how to get to it ; but fortunately the ferryman saw us when we were a long way off, shouted to ask if we wanted the " zámek " (castle), and then pulled back to shore, with his only passenger, and waited.

The village is very charming, lying all along both banks of the river, with rough timber cottages, sometimes white-washed, sometimes dark brown, their little gardens now full of apple and pear blossom. There are wide green stretches alongside of the river where little goose-girls were scattered, each tending a mother-goose and about a dozen fluffy yellow goslings. The children all gave us, with shy smiles, the Slovak greeting : " Pochválen Pán Ježíš Kristus " : Praised be the Lord Jesus Christ. By rows of Lombardy poplars, their buds just bursting, showing their tender russet leaves against the blue of the hills, we followed the course of the twisting road ; and passing the last house we came to the ferry, and were conveyed to the other side. The bottom of the boat was full of water, (including dead fish), but that was a trifle.



44. A SLOVAK SHEPHERD

The hill on which Strečno Castle stands is unfortunately being quarried away. Blasting was going on when we were there, and it is difficult to believe that this will not, in course of time, bring down the remains of the ruins. We climbed the hill on a rich carpet of cowslips, and found ourselves unexpectedly in the quarry precincts to which entrance is forbidden; but the manager obligingly let us through, and saved our having to retrace our steps.

Both the situation and appearance of the castle are romantic beyond description. The walls rise up sheer from the grey and reddish rocks, as if one with them, so as to defy any possible entrance from the waterside. Far below, the river, with a streak of white road following it, shines like a silver ribbon. The hills behind the castle recede, fold beyond fold, until the highest of all, still snowy, makes a barrier to further vision. Some are forest-clad, others are bare and rocky.

We passed through the ancient halls, where there are windows with decorated stone moulding, and wooden frames still in place, and even some of the beams of the floors are left. The windows have chiefly round-headed arches, but in the chapel are two very long lancet lights. Under the great square tower we stood, and the air became full of the agitated cries of hawks who had built their nests in the put-log holes. They hovered over us, so close that we could admire not only the sweep of their wings, but the beautiful patterns of the feathers, and the gleam of their tawny eyes. They had chosen a good place, safe from human interference, for here the old walls rise full 40 feet from overhanging platforms of rock, and are buttressed by great round buttresses which no one could climb.

The castle is said to have been built by Matthias Čák, at the end of the thirteenth century. It was destroyed in 1698 by the Emperor Leopold I. Up to 1644 it had been inhabited; the last owner, the Lady Sophie, who was much beloved for her kindness to the people, was buried just outside the castle. When it was destroyed, her remains were carefully disinterred

by those who had loved her, and taken to the church at Teplička, near Žilina, where they still lie.

This castle, and that of Starý Hrad at the next bend of the stream towards Vrutky, are said to have been the seats of rival leaders in the thirteenth century, and legends of love and jealousy and death are woven about them. From one point

Fig. 4.—Strečno Castle.

on the river, both castles are visible but they are hidden from each other by the bend.

After recrossing the Váh by the ferry, we settled to sketch on the shingly shore; and a small crowd soon gathered round. Immense amusement was caused when I sketched Janko, the ferryman, half-asleep in his boat, not knowing that there was a standing joke against him for sleepiness. The other

PLATE XX

Strečno Castle, Slovakia

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men shouted to tell him, with roars of laughter, but he did not seem to see the funny side of it and went off in high dudgeon. A boy with large loaves of black bread appeared amongst the crowd; it was not very appetizing by itself, but we were already hungry, and there seemed no chance of getting anything else, so we bought a loaf, and nibbled some of it while we painted. Heavy clouds crept up over the hills, and then quite suddenly it came on to rain. We had to run to the station for cover. On the way we saw every little goose-girl, each with her little flock, piloting them as quickly as possible to shelter. The whole road was congested with families of geese and goslings. We offered our large loaf of bread to the children—it was nearly whole—but not one would accept it. Perhaps we offended against Slav traditions in treating bread with so little ceremony. In the end we had to take it home with us.

On a later visit to Strečno we called at the tiny inn to borrow an enamelled plate, because one of us had forgotten to bring a palette. The good woman looked so fresh and clean in her white headkerchief, that we asked if she could give us lunch later. She had only milk and eggs, but we said that would do beautifully. When we returned at noon the room was full of navvies and quarrymen. We knocked at the little wooden shutter into the back room, and then sat down on a painted bench and waited; but no one came. Presently a quiet-looking man came forward and asked us what we wanted. When we told him, he went round to the farmyard at the back, thinking the hostess might be milking the cows. The other men then gathered round us and began quite civilly to ask questions, as to where we came from and what we were doing. One of the group, a big navvy whose face showed less intelligence than the rest, produced some live cockchafers out of his trousers' pocket, and threw them at us, with a silly laugh. The others were indignant, and expostulated with him. At the same moment the man who had gone out returned, and joined in the expostulations. Then at last the host appeared and showed us into a cool, clean, little private room, where he served us with

scrambled eggs and hot milk. Later we learned that the authorities pay so much a litre for cockchafers because of the damage they do to crops, and this was probably the beginning of a collection !

The quiet man came and talked to us while we ate. He told us he was a woodman, and that he did not live in Strečno, but was employed in the woods close by for a few days. Then he made a courteous little speech, saying that he hoped the English ladies would find themselves so happy in Slovakia that they would often come again, and if so they would always find Jan Sobota of Varin at their service. And he took off his hat with a low bow, shook hands with us, and went back to his work outdoors, having far more than outweighed by his kindness the one trifling discourtesy we met with on our travels.

Starý Hrad is on the opposite side of the river from Strečno, and is quite as romantically situated. When first we climbed up to it, we missed the path to the top, and found ourselves scrambling up the face of the hill with very little foothold, and with heavy rain streaming down from above. We sank deep into the damp leaf-mould, or slid back on the slippery rock, and the wet boughs of young beeches lashed our faces at every step ; but we reached the top at last, where through ancient archways we could look sheer down to the river below.

There was a general shop at Strečno to which we went to buy post cards ; we found the proprietor was himself a very good photographer, and had taken interesting subjects in the neighbourhood. He had one showing the people of Strečno fishing in the Váh. There were about thirty-five men and boys, up to their knees in water, standing in a line across the river and holding nets, so as to make a complete barrage for the unlucky fish. We consulted this man about the possibility of hailing a raft to take us down the river. He said it would be quite easy, and if we could wait till he had had his dinner, he would come with us to see about it. He led us through the shop to a kitchen at the back where his pretty young wife was cooking macaroni on the stove, and through the kitchen to a

PLATE XXI

Starý Hrad (*i.e.* "Old Castle"), Slovakia

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very nice bed-sitting-room beyond, all spotlessly clean. Here we waited, looking at books of his photographs. He had fought in Poland during the war, and had many snapshots of that time. A sunset was the one he valued most himself—with beautiful clouds, and delicate leafless trees silhouetted against them—because, as he said, " it was looking towards home."

Before long we found ourselves seated on a heap of shavings in the middle of a raft, and floating gaily down-stream. It is a beautiful way of seeing the river. The rafts on the Váh are not usually very long ; this one consisted of only two sections, each made of tree trunks about 30 feet long, with the thickest ends laid together so as to form two tapering shapes, and joined by cross-pieces fastened with wooden pegs. The finished raft was thus formed like a very elongated diamond, with both ends truncated. A man and a boy guided it, using long wooden sweeps. Our first journey on a raft was a short one, for the timber was due at the huge woodyard and saw-mills close to Varin. Here we were landed, rather to the surprise of the director of the works, who had come down to see the raft arrive. However, he kindly offered to take us all over his domain, and amid the screeching of the machinery, and the resinous scent of the sawn wood, we were shown how very rapidly a trunk can be sawn into planks of exactly the width required.

The work we were watching happened to be the execution of part of an order for Manchester. As we stood in that vast yard, with miles of timber and planks stacked around, it was possible to glimpse something of the importance of the timber industry in Slovakia ; in every part there are signs to prove it ; the rafts which literally swarm on the rivers, the piles of logs many feet high on the river-banks, the signs of the woodman's activity everywhere, in the forests, and on the roads, and the railways.

Our next trip was a longer one. Having once begun, we were now bold enough to hail a passing raft and make our own arrangements. It was at Kral'ovany one day that we

caught sight of a raft disappearing under the bridge, and raced to the river to try and head it off. The raftsmen saw our signs immediately, and showed the greatest activity in responding, heading towards the shore as rapidly as possible, and touching it just as we did. The man in command was a Magyar, and both he and his raft were superior in refinement to the one we boarded at Strečno. I said so in English when we were com-

Fig. 5.—A Raft on the Váh.

fortably settled, adding that the other raft was " third class," while now we were obviously travelling " druhá třída " (second class).

" Ne, první třída ! " (" No ! first class ") came in an indignant voice from the blue-shirted boy who was poling at a distance of about 20 feet from where we sat. We had no idea he was listening.

This raft was going to Komárno, close to where the Váh

joins the Danube, and the " captain " offered to take us all the way there, saying we should arrive in three days. We should have enjoyed it immensely, but the uncertainty of getting sleeping accommodation at the stopping-places was too great. The raftsmen have evidently fixed " stations " where they stop for the night, and the length of our present journey had to be determined in this way.

The part of the Váh we were following is particularly beautiful. On either side we had constantly changing vistas of mountain peaks, belonging to the Little Tatra or the Great Fatra ranges, while behind us the giants of High Tatra rose, snow-capped. At times the steep tree-covered banks shut us in completely ; then again they would open out and reveal a new arrangement of mountain peaks, some of them having apparently crossed over to the other side of the river since we last saw them. One very wild cliff, they told us, was called Sokol (the falcon). At a hair-pin bend of the river (or at least it *looked* a hair-pin bend, seen in perspective) our raftsmen showed tremendous activity in bringing us round ; but the swift waters were churned into a brown foam and dashed against the raft in quite respectable waves as they swirled round the bend, so no amount of good raftmanship could prevent the water from sluicing right over the logs, both fore and aft. We were high and dry on our bank of coarse shavings and chips, and we stayed there till all was quiet again. Until we actually travelled on a raft we had not realized how much skill was necessary for its navigation. The brilliant day began to cloud over towards five o'clock ; thick black clouds rose over High Tatra, and flashes of lightning could be seen in the distance. The fresh warm green of the trees in young leaf stood out in strong contrast against the inky sky, and a lurid light below the clouds was thrown back in coppery waves by the river. We watched the changing play of light and colour, quite enchanted. Our raftsman told us we need not fear getting wet, as there would be no rain till eight o'clock, after we had landed. He was perfectly right ; the rain began only while we were

walking home along the river-bank. We were dropped about 10 kilometres away from our sleeping-place, and there was no possible way of getting there except by walking; so I cannot say we did not get wet, but it counted for nothing against the glorious day we had had.

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From Žilina that same spring we went to stay near the famous Castle of Orava, which demands a chapter to itself.

PLATE XXII

Orava Castle, Slovakia

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PLATE XXII

Orava Castle, Slovakia

CHAPTER XXII

A RUSHING turbid river, overflowing its banks; a little copse, spangled with cowslips and other spring flowers, into which the river has penetrated; and, towering above the river, a mighty rock on whose steep sides and summit there clings a castle; that is what the word "Orava" recalls. It is the sweet scent of the cowslips, and the smell of the drenched earth that come back most vividly with the sound of that musical name, although it was really the castle that called us there, and is the origin and centre of the village at its feet.

The rock may be said to have originated the castle, and the castle the village. It was nearly always so in these parts: an impregnable position, chosen by a warring lord; a castle built on the summit, sometimes, as at Orava, extending downwards with the centuries; and a village growing up at the foot of the rock, to supply the needs of the castle. The very name of the village, "Oravský *Podzámok*," shows its subordination to the castle. "Under-castle," we might translate it.

This was one of the great strongholds of Slovakia in the Middle Ages, important partly because of its nearness to the Polish frontier. The rock on which it stands, rising abruptly from the river-bank, is 360 feet high, and the uppermost buildings seem to be set on a veritable knife-edge, so narrow and wedge-like is the summit of the rock. This is the oldest part, and dates from the thirteenth century. The lowest and latest buildings were completed three centuries after.

We had been told there was a little hotel, kept by a Jew, in the village; and so we planned to stay there several days.

The train from Kral'ovany brought us to a spot immediately facing the castle, on the opposite bank of the river. We had known something of what we had to expect; but this noble group of buildings on their lofty rock came upon us suddenly, and quite took us by surprise with their beauty. The river was then flowing serenely, throwing back clear reflections of castle and rock and encircling trees.

Following our luggage across the iron bridge, we soon came to a white house with a garden in front. This was the hotel; a primitive place, where the tiny restaurant would not seat comfortably more than a dozen people, and where a St Bernard dog, who walked about amongst the tables, threatened continually to clear them with his tail. The little chambermaid had bare feet and legs, wore a handkerchief over her head, and could speak nothing but Slovak. We were taken upstairs, and out on to a wooden balcony, which ran round three sides of a courtyard at the back. Near this was our bedroom, with a window looking towards the castle.

After supper, though it was nearly dark, we could not resist the call of the sweet spring evening, and wandered out towards the castle, towering up as a black mass into the star-strewn sky. A curious sound greeted us before we went to bed, an often-repeated rumble and rattle, with excited shouts and cries. It proved to come from a wooden bowling-alley built along the fourth side of the courtyard, where a group of men from the village were much enjoying a game of ninepins. Between the upright planks of the alley-walls, we could see their moving figures, under the electric light, and we could hear the wooden ball bumping and rumbling along the plank floor, and the crash which was the sign of every victory.

Next morning early we were out on the steep hill close behind the hotel, where there was a garden with fruit trees, and still higher, a little wood, full of cowslips. We were looking forward to a long day's painting, but rain came on heavily, and continued for two days.

Our first resource was to visit the castle, which is daily

open to visitors. An arched tunnel leads into the inner court of the lower part. In answer to our ring at the bell, a porter came forward, laden with keys, and began to take us round. We asked a few questions, but nothing we said produced any response, and finally we discovered that our guide was deaf and dumb! Fortunately another man appeared later,

Fig. 6.—Orava Castle.

who was able to be more communicative. We saw first the chapel, with its flamboyant and over-decorated interior. It was built in 1611 by Count George Thurzo, a zealous Protestant who then owned the castle. He spent much of his life fighting against the Turks, who were not driven out of Hungary until 1683. In the archives of the castle there are about a hundred letters that passed between the Count and his

young wife when he was absent at the war. We saw two gruesome oil-paintings of this same pair in their coffins, reckoned the most valuable pictures in the castle.

In 1670 Thurzo's son-in-law, Stephen Tököly, also a Protestant, joined with the Turks against the Emperor Leopold, and, in consequence, the imperial army laid siege to the castle. Stephen died during the siege, and only then did the garrison surrender. There is a picturesque story of his young son, Emeric, who was sent for safety to the Castle of Likava before Orava was besieged. Though he was only fourteen years old, when he heard of his father's death he fled from Likava by night, disguised as a woman, and assumed the leadership in his father's place. The last siege of Orava Castle was in 1709, after the vain attempt of Rákóczy to obtain the independence of Hungary. In 1800 it was partly burned, and has not been rebuilt; but roofs have been provided to prevent it from falling into worse repair.

As usual, there is an extensive museum. This one includes an armoury, and a natural history collection, showing the animal and vegetable products of the neighbourhood; also a number of wooden models of bridges, weirs, houses, rafts and one of the castle itself. Here for the first time we saw a specimen of the *fujara*, an immense wooden pipe, played by Slovak shepherds. It was 18 feet long, wide in proportion, and made a most unearthly noise when the castellain blew it for our benefit. In the inner court of the middle castle there is a well cut in the rock, 312 feet deep, 32 feet of which are below the level of the bed of the river. It was nearly full. We asked if the water was fit for drinking, and the castellain replied with a grimace; but we thought that if the castle had been under siege for some weeks he would probably not have despised it. A daughter of Count Thurzo is said to have been drowned there in the seventeenth century. In this middle part of the castle there are still some beautiful old oak ceilings. The highest part is reached by many stairs, and there is a wide view of the river and hills from a little gallery outside one of the towers.

The rain continued steadily, all that day and all the next. We tried to brave it, but it was so heavy that we were driven in again. Then on the third day it cleared, and we hastened out to find a spot for sketching the castle. Everything was sodden, and the river had been transformed into a rushing heaving flood, bringing down on its bosom branches of trees, and turf torn from the banks. The paths which run alongside the river were completely covered, and the little copse between river and railway was almost cut in two. Here we found a marvellous profusion of spring flowers. There were cowslips, each blossom as large as a primrose, and as many as twenty-six on a stalk! There were violets, silvery wood-sorrel, the blue and purple lungwort, forget-me-nots, butter-bur, and huge purple heads of the parasitic broom-rape. We climbed the railway embankment, and found the only dry spot to sit was on the line, where sleepers made a solid foundation. We had with us a strong cardboard box, so one of us sat in the box and the other in the lid, and thus kept out of the mud. Of course we had to move out of the way whenever an infrequent train came by. But nobody seemed to mind.

. . . . . .

It was to this romantic district that the Slovak poet and patriot, Hviezdoslav, belonged, and some of his best poems give pictures of the peasant life and of the natural beauty of the country.

. . . . . .

And now to return to our autumn journey, which was broken off at Žilina, two chapters ago.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE fame of the remote mountain village of Čičmany had reached us, but we had very little idea how far it was from a railway station, and we found that at Žilina, when we inquired, no two people told us the same thing. So we decided to go and find out for ourselves, and one morning we took the eight o'clock train for Rajec na Slovensku, which is the terminus of a small branch line running southward from Žilina, up into the mountains. This is one of the innumerable valleys of Slovakia which can lay claim to great beauty. In less than half an hour we came in sight of the Castle of Lietava, standing high on its rocky pinnacles, and we registered a vow to visit it another day. Near Porubka, bare grey rocks rose in high columns above the stream; there were very few trees there, but as we approached Rajec the country became much more wooded. At Rajecké Teplice, on the outskirts of Rajec and already 1400 feet above the sea, there are hot salt springs, which warm the whole earth and make the winters very mild, so it has many villas and plenty of accommodation for visitors.

Alighting at Rajec, we followed the other passengers to the little town, or rather big village, which is not very close to the station. We made a few inquiries about the distance to Čičmany, but no one seemed to know. At last one man told us it was 21 kilometres away, and that he did not think we could get a conveyance, but we had better enquire in the square. As usual a stream runs through the village, and frequent bridges are necessary to enable one to cross the road, for the water is deep. The square is intersected by many little brooks which have to be jumped, and we were amused to notice the

agility with which quite aged women, bent double with years, picked up their skirts and jumped across—a skill no doubt acquired in childhood, and kept up by enforced practice. We made inquiries at the inn, and after a good deal of hesitation the innkeeper agreed to provide us with a " conveyance " and horses for 100 crowns, which he insisted should be paid in advance. It was to be ready in half an hour, so I sat on a heap of stones above the streams and sketched passing Slovaks until it was ready.

When it appeared, it proved to be a farm-cart of the roughest type, about 14 feet long, and with the floor consisting of just three planks, each about 8 inches wide, while the sides were made of long poles, mere rough branches, barked and fastened together with wooden pegs and loops of wire. It was something like the cart in Plate XXIX. Needless to say, it had no springs ; but the very looseness of the construction made it able to stand any amount of jolting and bumping, for its parts were free to sway and yield instead of being strained. Our seat was a large bundle of straw covered with a blanket, placed towards the rear of the cart, while the driver had a bundle of hay in the front. And so we set off in state, watched by a crowd of the inhabitants with keen interest.

The roads were of the roughest, full of holes, with rough stones, mud and puddles to vary the monotony ; but the young driver and his horses cared for none of these things and kept up a fair pace. Before we were quite clear of the houses, a slight noise made us look round, and there was a peasant woman in a scarlet headkerchief clambering up on to the back of our cart, and crouching down behind the mass of straw. When she saw she was discovered, she looked at us with a half-pleading, half-humorous smile, and laid her finger on her lips. It was quite unnecessary, because our conveyance made such a squeaking and rattling and bumping all the time as to make it impossible for the driver to hear at his end what was going on at ours. However, we spoke to her in whispers and gave her leave to steal a free lift. When we got near to a little

white church on a hill she slipped down quietly, and disappeared.

The lovely valley narrowed gradually. It was very wide at first, with rows of slender poplar trees, turning to a rich gold, and "forcing" the blue of the hills beyond. In some parts it reminded us of the Valley of Rocks at Lynton in Devonshire, for bare grey rock-scars and pinnacles rose up on either side. We passed through the village of Fačkov, where the men, wearing grey-blue caps trimmed with fur, and grey-blue coats to match, greeted us in a friendly way. Still narrower grew the valley, with beech trees turning gold and crimson closing in on either side. In a fairly flat meadow we saw some familiar-looking erections. Could they be——? Yes; our driver looked round and grinned at us saying, "Football." He then explained that these goal-posts had been set up by young men who camped out there for their holidays. The English name for the game is always used. It was curious to see the goal-posts here, so far away from any human habitation.

After driving three and a half hours, we saw before us some very new wooden roofs, and the general appearance of a Garden-City suburb when it is half-built. Surely this was not the renowned Čičmany? It was indeed the northern end, and we learnt in the village that this part had all been burned down and was now being rebuilt. The most beautiful part of the village is certainly the southern end now, whatever it was before. There we saw wonderful old wooden houses, covered with decoration; patterns carved in wood, and showing up light brown on dark, or else dark brown on light. A mountain stream twists through the valley; on its brilliant green banks are great trees, and scattered irregularly among the trees are these brown houses. But the most wonderful sight is the costume of the people. It is quite different from that of any other village. The women and girls wear nothing but white, delicately embroidered with varied reds, browns and yellows; white accordion-pleated skirts, white aprons worked with beautiful patterns, white bodices and puffed sleeves, decorated

45. THE VILLAGE OF CICMANY

at neck, shoulders and wrists; while the married women with children have curiously shaped white head-dresses also embroidered with red and gold, and trimmed with lace like the aprons. Think what it is to see women, girls and little children all going about their daily work, fetching water from the stream, going in and out of the wooden cottages, sitting

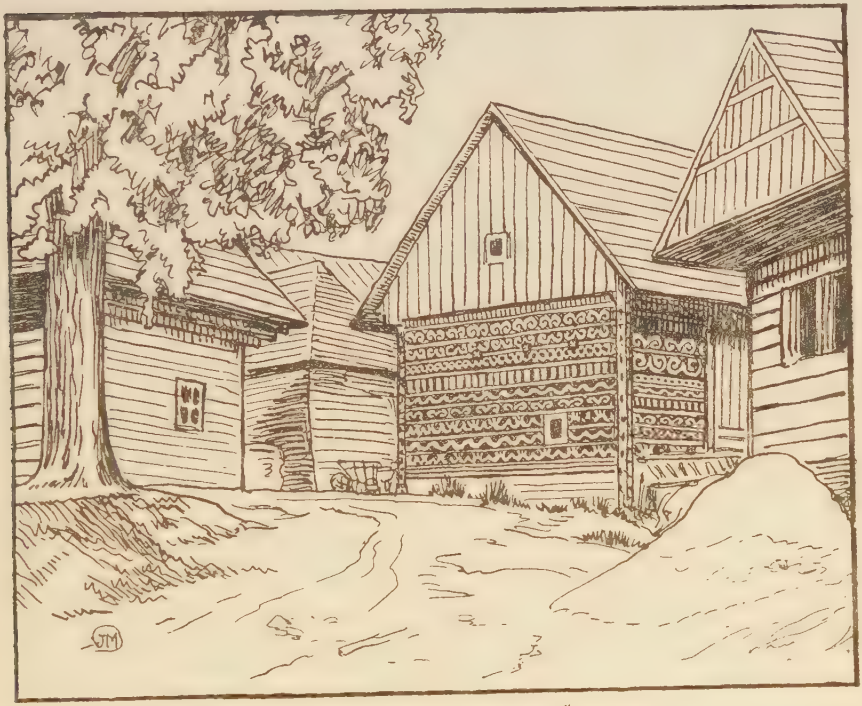

Fig. 7.—Decorated House at Čičmany.

on the fresh green grass under the shadow of the trees, all dressed in these delicate and decorative garments on all high days and holidays! Summer and winter alike it is the same, but in winter they have white coats and extra shawls (also white), to keep them warm. When we saw them in late September every garment was spotlessly clean, in spite of muddy roads and puddles. The young girls looked particularly charming and unself-conscious. There is no artificial feeling of

" dressing-up " to show off their finery, for very few visitors come to the village.

But I must go back to our first arrival. Our driver took us straight to the inn, where he told us we should be able to get lunch. We found the proprietor and his family having their midday meal in an inner room where several other men were sitting, presumably having finished theirs. The soup smelt very good, but there was none left! We had arrived too late. Nothing was to be had but coffee and black bread, and while we partook of this the other men began to talk to us. One with a very long beard introduced his clean-shaven neighbour to us as the village pastor (farář), and then the clean-shaven one introduced the other as the school-teacher. When they heard I was a painter, and was wanting to get a sitter from among the women and girls, they promised to help us in any way they could.

First they escorted us to the schoolhouse, where the teacher showed us some photographs he had taken of the costumes.

At the schoolhouse we met other teachers, a young man and a girl. Then the woman who looked after the teacher's house was asked to sit for me, and she agreed at once. She made such a charming picture standing on the verandah of the schoolhouse, with one hand on the wooden post which helped to support its roof, that I begged her to keep that position. They brought me a chair out into the little garden, and I settled to work. Presently it came on to rain, but one of our new acquaintances held an umbrella over me until I had finished.

My sitter, Katerina Chupek-Chlebišová, told me she had been in the service of an English lady who had lived in the village a few years before, working for the Red Cross, but she had not learnt to speak any English. Her small three-year-old son came to look for her while she was sitting to me, and could not understand why she did not come to him when he called " Mamičká! " He went off happily, clinging to her skirts, when she was ready to go home.

Meanwhile my friend had been taken into the schoolhouse

PLATE XXIII

A Čičmany Matron, Slovakia

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Meanwhile my friend had been taken into the schoolhouse

J. Mathieson

where there was a little gathering of women of the village. One of them offered to show her the oldest houses, and finally took her to her own home, a substantial house, nicely furnished. I wandered up the village after her and found so much of interest and beauty that the time was all too short. The trees and the stream, with their background of mountains and white figures flitting about against them, made a whole series of delightful subjects. The "clear shining after rain" had brought all the people out of their houses. Several young girls were sitting in a group outside one open door, with their mother. I stopped for a moment at a little distance to admire the picture, but the mother rose immediately and shoo'ed them all indoors like a hen gathering in her chickens. In one second all were indoors, and the door safely shut. A little farther on another group entered into friendly conversation at once.

At last we had to drag ourselves away, for our driver said we should not be back before dark, so we mounted again into our chariot and set off, with a small crowd of villagers to wave good-bye. The innkeeper ran after us to beg "as a remembrance," for some little English coin, if we had one about us. For the first time I regretted the loss of two pennies and a halfpenny, which had disappeared mysteriously at Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš. I thought the chambermaid must have taken them "as a remembrance." So we had nothing now for the innkeeper.

Our driver had a friend with him on the "box" for the return journey. They could not have been very comfortable, the box-seat having been almost entirely consumed by the horses, for it had consisted of the hay for their midday meal. But the two boys seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves, chattering away together, and whipping up the horses to a fine pace. We had to cling on to the sides as best we could. None the less it was a delightful journey through the still, sweet-smelling evening air. Downhill, it only took us three hours; but it was dark long before we arrived. We saw many shepherds,

some driving their sheep home, others still out in the fields, lighting fires to keep themselves warm. One flock reached the road ahead of their shepherd, and tore along in front of our galloping horses for at least 400 yards, the poor old shepherd running panting behind, till at last the sheep turned off the road up a steep grassy hill, and there waited for him. At Rajec the keeper of the *hostinec* greeted us like old friends when we careered triumphantly into the darkness of his archway. A crowd of his customers gathered behind him in the doorway to see us alight. We told him we had had a glorious day, but were very hungry. However, he could offer us nothing whatever but beer, which we declined. So we took our leave, and fortunately came across a little maid who was going to the station, which otherwise we might hardly have found in the dark; and she on her part seemed very glad to have our company. At Žilina we were regaled on cold chicken and compôte; and indeed we needed it, for it was our first good meal in the day.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE next day we took the same eight o'clock train, getting out after half an hour at Lietava-Lučka, to visit the Castle of Lietava, which had impressed us so much as seen from the train. We inquired the way of a railway man who was busy examining sleepers, and marking such as needed to be renewed. He asked us to walk with him along the line, until he presently pointed out a road curving westward round a hill, telling us we could not miss the castle if we followed this. It was a lovely walk, full of pleasant sights, scents and sounds. On the steep hillside on our right a shepherd boy was singing to his sheep ; in the fields on our left peasants were working. The fragrance of the aftermath was in the air.

Before long the castle came into view ahead on the left, shadowed by a cloud. We left the road and climbed the slopes on our right, not now so steep, that I might choose a good point of view for a sketch of the castle. We found ourselves in a veritable flower garden, with rich blue gentian, the lighter blue of succory, yellow scabious, a tiny brilliant crimson dianthus and purple campanulas. And here was actually a fragrant wild rose, surely the last rose of summer, growing on a bush otherwise covered with scarlet hips and yellowing leaves.

We sat down beside a rough cart-track, where ox-carts passed us frequently, taking men and women to their work in the fields. The castle, still under a dark cloud-shadow, rose up in solemn dignity above the little farm at the foot of the hill, and the sunlight strayed from one part of the valley to another as the wind shifted the lighter clouds. When we felt hungry we went down to the farm where, as we were told in our Czech

guide-book, " refreshments of the country " could be obtained. The farmhouse, surrounded by out-buildings, was all on one floor, and had a verandah running along the front, covered with climbing convolvulus, and its great purple bells were at their very best. The door was opened by a neat, pretty, little woman with the usual handkerchief over her head, and when we made our request she at once took us into her best room and asked us to sit down. Everything was spotlessly clean. She brought us bowls of sour milk and slices of " black " bread, which we found very delicious, and while we ate she stood and talked to us. She told us that a Hungarian Baron, who had a big house at Bytčica, owned the farm and all the land round there, and that he was a very good man to work for. She showed us photographs of herself with her husband and two children, taken several years ago, and of her brother who had been killed in the war. On the wall I noticed a little printed text, with a coloured design of Slovak character. This is what was written (but in Slovak) :

" Blessing on the Home."
" Where faith is, there is love ;
Where love is, there is harmony ;
Where harmony is, there is blessing ;
Where blessing is, there is God ;
And where God dwells, no sense of lack can stay."

She saw that I was interested in it, and asked if we had such things in England. While we talked, I felt that we might be in a little farmhouse in our own country, for all the barriers of race, custom and language fell away in the presence of this simple loving soul ; and I laughed to myself as I thought of the untrue pictures of " Slovaks " which have been foisted on the world at large. I need hardly say I should have been delighted to sleep in that little house, if the need and opportunity had arisen.

When it came to payment, Pavlina Cadvik (for that was her name) would not hear of letting us pay anything at all. She was calmly resolute, and we could do nothing. It occurred to me that she might like a snapshot of herself, so I asked her.

46. LIETAVA CASTLE

"I would rather have a picture of the dear ladies," she said (meaning ourselves); then she hesitated, and added: "But my children come home from school at three o'clock. . . ."

So we promised to stop on our way back from visiting the castle, and to photograph the children.

We followed the steep hill up to the castle, which is built on very striking natural bastions of rock, so that it is sometimes difficult to see where the castle ends and the rock begins. There are gradual ascents by which the summit can be reached, from Žilina or from Teplice, but to save time we scrambled up on the precipitous side, and through an inviting (but broken) archway at the top. It was a difficult path, not only because of its steepness, but on account of the loose stones and crumbling shale, where heavy rains had washed down portions of the ruin. Yet the glorious view more than made up for the scramble. Once through the archway, we saw before us a sort of green amphitheatre curving round, with grassy slopes leading gently down to the valley, and a wide circle of hills in every direction. This castle was one of the greatest in the country, and its ruins are very wonderful, though not easy to explore.

On the way back we called at the farm, and soon the children returned from the large school at Žilina to which they go by train every day. They were nice-looking children, a boy and a girl, about ten years old, and they bowed and kissed our hands when their mother introduced them. The mother and daughter had to pick a dahlia or a few pinks from the sheltered little garden to hold in their hands while they were being photographed. The father was too shy to come forward at all.

We walked back to the station to catch the evening train. Fields of mauve poppies in full bloom showed us where some, at least, of the poppy seeds come from. Farther on a pretty sight attracted us—a baby lying in a cloth suspended from three sticks, like the tripod for a camp-fire, and a dear little girl of five or six, rocking it, and singing a Slovak lullaby at the

top of her voice. The mother and older children were digging potatoes at the other end of the field. This tripod cradle for babies is often seen in the fields. Another picture we saw was of a father and mother lighting a fire of sticks, not exactly underneath, but very near such a tripod, to keep the baby warm in the evening air.

The buckets on an overhead line were still creaking busily, bringing stone from the mountains to be crushed at the Lietava-Lučka cement factory, when we reached the village. A man we met told us there was a restaurant connected with the factory where perhaps we could get some food; but we failed to find it, and again had to wait till we reached Žilina before getting an evening meal.

CHAPTER XXV

FROM Žilina our route now lay southward, to Zvolen and Detva.

Before reaching Zvolen, already we began to see peasants working in the fields, wearing the full white trousers, gathered round the waist, which are so characteristic of this part, and especially of Detva. The line runs part of the way through very thick pine forests. At Zvolen we changed for Baňská Bystrica, passing close by Zvolen Castle, which stands high above the river Slatina, and which we meant to see on our way back.

Baňská Bystrica has been called the most beautiful town of Slovakia; a Slovak proverb even suggests a comparison with heaven, so we expected a great deal from it, and were rather disappointed. It is pleasantly situated on one side of the river Hron (a tributary of the Danube), just where it is joined by the Bystrice, and the steep wooded banks on the other side form the background of the town. It was probably on the banks of this very river that Marcus Aurelius wrote part of his *Meditations*, during one of his campaigns against the Quadi.

Baňská Bystrica is an old mining town, as its name indicates. During the middle of the nineteenth century it was second only to Turčiansky Svatý Martin as a centre of Slovak national life.

The square is picturesque, with two fifteenth-century Gothic churches and the bishop's palace, all grouped together. The larger church has twice been destroyed by fire. It contains an ancient twelve-sided font of the Hussite period (1475), in the shape of a chalice. In the square there still stands the old house with a balcony where Gabriel Bethlen, the

ally of the "Winter King," was elected King of Hungary in 1620.

It was very hot for walking about, and we were so anxious not to miss seeing the vaunted beauty of the place that we engaged an automobile, asking the driver to take us to the most beautiful parts; so we went right through the town, then along by the river, to the suburb of Saint John, and round the outskirts, until we felt we had a good general impression. It is a pleasant place; but there were many others that had attracted us more.

. . . . . .

The great feature of Zvolen is its castle, celebrated in Slovak song and history. It is a massive four-sided building, dating from 1351, with curiously shaped battlements, and is surrounded by a high wall with round towers at the angles. King Matthew Corvin often held his court here, and it was here that Gabriel Bethlen kept the Hungarian crown, which fell into his hands at the taking of Bratislava in 1619. There are pictures of the Hungarian kings on the ceiling of one of the halls. The whole building is now used for State Offices.

We found a very comfortable hotel in the square, the "Grand," and from its windows we had a fine view of the early morning market, against the background of the fourteenth-century church. In this church there is another example of a stone font in the form of a chalice; and brass lamps of 1566 and a silver cup of 1620 belong also to the period when the church was used by the Hussites.

Queen Elizabeth, the daughter of Sigismund, and widow of the short-reigned Albert of Hapsburg, handed over the whole town of Zvolen to the Hussite leader, Jan Jiskra of Brandýs, in 1439. Hunyadi, fighting against him, burned it down twelve years later. So we get glimpses of how the religious wars raged in Slovakia, as well as in Bohemia, their centre of origin. Encircled by hills, the town stands nearly 1000 feet above sea-level, close to where the Slatina flows into the Hron.

PLATE XXIV

Zvolen Castle, Slovakia

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We found a very comfortable hotel in the square, the "Grand," and from its windows we had a fine view of the early morning market, against the background of the fourteenth-century church. In this church there is another example of a stone font in the form of a chalice; and brass lamps of 1566 and a silver cup of 1620 belong also to the period when the church was used by the Hussites.

Queen Elizabeth, the daughter of Sigismund, and widow of the short-reigned Albert of Hapsburg, handed over the whole town of Zvolen to the Hussite leader, Jan Jiskra of Brandýs, in 1439. Hunyadi, fighting against him, burned it down twelve years later. So we get glimpses of how the religious wars raged in Slovakia, as well as in Bohemia, their centre of origin. Encircled by hills, the town stands nearly 1000 feet above sea-level, close to where the Slatina flows into the Hron.

Down by the river we found green peaceful spots, away from the dust and heat of the streets. Zvolen means " chosen " or " elected," and we found it a good name.

. . . . . .

Detva is a large Slovak village long famous for the distinctive character and dress of its people. It can be reached by travelling about forty minutes in the train from Zvolen, and then walking for a full half-hour towards the mountains.

We found there were signs of great excitement at all the railway stations, where groups of young men were being seen off by their friends and relations to undergo their eighteen months of military training. It gave a splendid opportunity of seeing the village costumes, for all were dressed in their best for the occasion, and from miles away in the mountains some of these girls and boys had come to the tiny wayside stations between Zvolen and Detva.

Each young man who was leaving home carried a largish wooden box, with a brass handle on the top, in which were bestowed all the personal possessions he would need while he was away. This period of " military service " in Czechoslovakia is made an opportunity for general education and training of the young men of the Republic. The illiterates (chiefly Slovaks, and Ruthenians) learn to read and write, and those who have already had a good elementary education attend continuation classes where history and literature are taught. One chief aim is to encourage a spirit of humanity and brotherhood ; and the officers are expected to be not merely drill-instructors, but teachers, to whom the men can confidently turn in any difficulty.

When we reached Detva station the crowd was greater than ever. The train for Bratislava was just leaving, full of recruits, and they were being given a good send-off, with shoutings and songs and the scraping of violins. We had no need to ask the way to the village, for the returning escort of young men was our guide, and we followed them along the road, much entertained by their music and dancing. Some of the women and girls were also returning home, but in waggons drawn by oxen

or horses. There were two violins with the party on foot ahead of us, and they kept up a merry tune the whole way, but the players had clearly no rigid convictions as to how a violin should be held. It was partly from the music of the Detva district that the famous composers, Liszt and Brahms, drew the inspiration for their so-called "Hungarian Rhapsodies," and "Hungarian Dances"; and certainly these peasants seemed to play as spontaneously as they breathed. The

FIG. 8.—A VIOLINIST, DETVA.

singing was intermittent, anyone joining in for a little while just when he felt inclined; and the dancing reminded me of a Scottish reel, for they danced with one arm over the head, and the swing of the full white trousers was just like the swing of a kilt. Indeed these trousers seen from behind have every appearance of a short skirt, and usually a black apron embroidered in rich colours is worn in front, to make the resemblance complete. The trousers have white fringe round the bottom, and sometimes a line of red embroidery a little way

above. The shirts are white, with very little embroidery, if any. All the Slovak love of colour and design is really concentrated on the Detvan's waistcoat and apron—but especially on the waistcoat. This is of leather dyed a rich crimson, usually stitched with green thread, and appliquéd with elaborate shapes of yellow and bright jade-green. Sometimes the yellow and green are pierced so as to show another colour underneath. The coat is of very dark grey or black cloth, perhaps made of

Fig. 9.—A Dancer, Detva.

a natural black sheep's wool, and is embroidered all round with red and light brown, including the neck and sleeves. But it is very rarely that the Detvan puts his arms into his sleeves: the coat is hung round his neck by a strap, and the sleeves hang loose on either side. The hat is felt, dark green or black, with sometimes a decoration of cock's feathers, or artificial flowers mixed with silver tinsel, like an ornament from a cake. The feet are cased in Wellington boots, the tops of which are just hidden by the full trousers.

No notice was taken of us at first, but when it was seen that we kept following on behind there was a little consultation between some of the men, and then one young man came forward and asked where we were going. I replied :

" To Detva."

" And why are you going to Detva ? "

" I am a painter from England, and we have heard of the fame of Detva in England, so I am going to paint there."

He made no answer to this, but strode along beside us rather thoughtfully. Presently I said :

" Perhaps you do not understand what I say ? "

" Oh yes," he answered gravely ; " I understand Czech perfectly. That was why they sent me to talk to you. Most of them speak only Slovak."

At this I could not help smiling, for however perfect might be his understanding of *Czech* it did not follow that he would understand *me* !

Then he went on, " We have been taking leave of our young men, who go to join the army. Next week I go myself. It is a sad thing to leave one's home for so long. But it has to be. It is for the Republic."

Another young man came alongside in a much gayer mood, and pointing to a spot half-way up the hill, beyond Detva, he said :

" That is my home ; it is four hours to walk there. It is very beautiful up there, with the woods all round. You should come and see it."

We had been told that Detvans resent the visits of strangers if they think they come out of curiosity ; " to make a show of us," they say ; but we met with nothing but courtesy.

We were now approaching the village, and as we entered it the band of young men broke up and scattered, taking leave of us, and we walked on alone. The usual stream runs through the village, which is very long, and in some parts has a double street, even widening out into a square outside the church.

The houses, nearly all of wood, are built as usual with the gable-ends next the street. Some of them have tiled roofs, and many have white-washed or yellow-washed walls. There are tall trees, including Lombardy poplars, growing by the stream, but nowhere very thickly.

A procession was filing out of the church as we passed it—evidently a funeral procession; so we followed it to the end of the village street, round to the right, and up a little hill to the graveyard. The bearers were young men dressed just in the way that I have described; there were also six men carrying large black lanterns on poles, containing lighted candles. Some of the village women followed, wearing long black dresses of an early Victorian style, with black-and-white handkerchiefs over their heads; but men were in the majority. The little graveyard was pleasantly situated, with many trees and gay flowers growing in amongst the simple wooden crosses. Beautifully embroidered coverings were thrown over the coffin; we could not see if these were buried with it, for we kept at a little distance away. As the earth was being thrown in—a process in which not only the sexton, but all the well-dressed young men who had acted as bearers, took a hand—the widow and three children clung together, and gave utterance in unison to a plaintive song. They seemed to be extolling the virtues of the husband and father who had left them.

We sat, unnoticed, behind one of the crosses, and waited there till there was no one left but ourselves. Then we also went back to the village.

I chose a spot to paint on a little wooden bridge crossing the stream, and there by degrees the children gained courage to come and talk to me, though fortunately there was not width for them to make a crowd; and I had to be very strict with them about keeping still, or the bridge itself would have been in perpetual motion.

My friend sat on the mainland, on a log, and made her own observations. Presently she came to talk to me in some excitement.

"Look," she said, "that little house calls itself a bank, and I believe that is the bank manager in the stream."

Then she added, "What about that 500-crown note?"

I must explain that our custom of leaving the house at 7.30, and remaining out all day, gave us no opportunity of visiting the banks in the towns where we spent the nights, so our only chance was to find one open at midday wherever we happened to be; and we had not yet succeeded in changing the "bad" note which could only be cashed at a bank.

I looked up the stream, and saw a young man helping a lady to separate a dozen refractory ducks from a whole crowd disporting themselves in the water.

"He must be the bank manager," said my friend, "for I saw him lock the door and put the key in his pocket."

"Then I'm afraid as usual the bank is shut," said I, laughing.

But all the same I left my bridge, and walked towards the young man who was now driving the ducks with a switch towards the bank. In answer to my query, he said he *was* the bank manager, and that although the bank had shut for the day at twelve o'clock, it was the easiest thing in the world to open it if I wanted to do any business. This was the most convenient bank I had ever come across! I was soon handing my note over the counter, pointing out the burnt hole with great care.

"Oh, we don't think anything of *that*," said the manager, as he handed me my full change.

We were introduced to the lady who had charge of the bank house, and also of a small store adjoining, where various things were sold, including soap and tooth-brushes. She was a handsome dark Roumanian, with a slim fair daughter of seventeen. They came and talked to us, but with some difficulty, for the Roumanian lady knew nothing but Roumanian, and the bank manager had to translate into Slovak. We inquired about the old Detvans who still wore their hair in plaits. We knew there were some, but at present we had

PLATE XXV

Lamp-bearers, Detva, Slovakia

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only seen the younger men who are much too up-to-date for that. No one could go into the army with his hair hanging in pigtails, two on either side of his chest! They told us there were four or five old men living in the village of Hrinová, high up in the hills, but that it was difficult for us to find, and a long way to walk.

"Could we not have a guide?"

Yes, perhaps we could; perhaps some way could be found. They would think it over. We asked if there was an inn in Detva where we could stop the night, but they told us there was nothing suitable. Then the bank manager said:

"Wait a minute; perhaps Madame can take you in; I will speak to her."

In a short time he said it was all arranged, and that we should have the whole of the next day for visiting Hrinová. In the meantime they begged us to come in and have a meal, so we soon found ourselves enjoying excellent soup, scrambled eggs and apples in the room behind the bank, waited on by the young daughter. Madame had a great ambition to send this daughter to a school in England, and had many questions to ask as to cost; but she came to the conclusion that English prices were beyond her means, and that the girl would have to go to Vienna to learn German, instead of to England to learn English.

Later, the bank manager took us to call on the only person in the village who spoke any English, a Magyar, who had been teaching himself with the help of a German-English grammar and dictionary for two years, in hopes of going out to America some day. He welcomed us very courteously into his rooms, where he evidently lived alone. The walls were covered with sketches he had made for his own amusement, of Detva and the Detvans. He, naturally, was able to write English much better than to speak it; but it was wonderful what progress he had made all by himself. He had been, up to seventeen years previously, a forester in the employ of the Hungarian Government, and now had a small pension.

We spoke of the Land Reform system, for it comes very much to the fore in an agricultural village like Detva. Many peasants there have obtained pieces of ground of their own, but our Magyar friend was of opinion that it would not help them for long " because," as he said, " the increase of them is very great." The sons all work on the father's land, and after his death they divide it up amongst themselves, " so," he added, " only one child would be the best remedy for the farmer."

Here was the " small-family " theory, already seeking a foothold in backward Slovakia ! We may hope that another solution will be found. Better methods of cultivating the land are being introduced ; and the better education now available will enable some of the sons to find a useful calling away from home.

The young men of Detva are tall, fine-looking fellows, with very intelligent faces, well able to stand comparison with the young manhood of any other part of the world.

There is a proverb that the Detvan is born with a hatchet in his hand, because ever since the village was founded in 1638 it has been necessary for them to clear away the woods in order to cultivate the ground.

They told us that only the well-to-do farmers of the village could afford to eat meat, and that would be chiefly pork from their own pigs. A man is reckoned well-to-do if he has two oxen or two or three horses for working on the land, two or three cows, two or three pigs, and fifty to sixty sheep. The food of the poorer people consists of potatoes, vegetables, black bread, milk and cheese, with the inevitable red pepper. Those who can afford it have macaroni every few days, and eggs are also a luxury.

The Magyar gave us an amusing account of a well-to-do Detvan's wedding, in his dry way and in his quaint English. It is the custom for the bride to give the bridegroom on the eve of the wedding a feather for his hat, a shirt to wear at the ceremony, and a handkerchief. After they are married

they each return home, meeting again at the bride's house for dinner later. "Only the worthy older guests," sit down at the table. There is much dancing and music. Then an "adorned wag" appears (a waggon, we found this meant) to carry the bride's goods, mainly bedclothes, to her new home. But "vanity belongs to the husbandmen, and mostly to their wives"; the bride's goods are placed on the "wag" in such a way that every one may see and admire! Music and singing accompany the procession, and the whole village comes and stands at its doors to look and listen as it passes by. The bride at her new home salutes "the whole affinity by marriage," and gives them presents, articles of dress. There is more singing and dancing, and so the festivities end, having sometimes occupied three days.

The following fairy story, told by Detvans, is interesting, and well illustrates the tendency of all nationalities to claim for themselves the rôle of hero in the piece.

"The Cross of Christ at Jerusalem was taken by the Turks and shut up in a castle closed by seven iron gates. To Jerusalem there came an Englishman, a Frenchman, a Russian, a Slovak, a German and an Italian, and considered how to get back the Cross from the Turks. The Englishman said, 'We will buy it, cost what it may.' The Frenchman said, 'We will bring several regiments of soldiers and take it.' The Russian said, 'My Cossacks will get hold of it in an hour.' But the Detvan said, 'I will steal it in the night.'

"Early the next day he brought it to his astonished comrades. They asked him, 'How did you get through the iron gates, and how did you overcome the Turkish guard?' The Detvan pointed to his belt and said, 'There I have a magic wand. With it I struck, and everything opened, and the guard stood like wood.'

"'And what do you want for it?' asked the representatives of the European great-powers, accustomed to think that nothing in the world could be done without payment.

"'Nothing,' replied the Detvan proudly, 'except that you

should know that . . . a . . . *Detvan* . . . is . . . a . . . *Detvan.*' "

. . . . . .

I continued my sketch from the bridge. There were women in gay garments washing clothes in the stream, standing in the water with their skirts tucked between their legs to keep them dry. Much amusement was caused by a tiny girl who was imitating every action of the grown-ups, spreading clothes on a flat stone and beating them with a piece of wood, and tucking up her skirts in the most approved fashion. There were certainly no signs of poverty or slovenliness among the people of this village. The women and girls who came round us looked as fresh and clean and neat as possible.

Returning to the bank, we were shown our room, a very pleasant one, with a window looking out into the village street. There our supper was served, macaroni, and coffee and apples. It was only through examining the pictures on the walls, which showed our bank manager at various ages, in family groups which included seven brothers, that we discovered that he had given up his own room to us, and was sleeping for the night on the dining-room sofa. We liked him so much ; he was just like a nice English boy of twenty-five. He and Madame had been busy on our behalf, having arranged with the Jewish doctor to drive us to Hrinová early the next morning, and to fetch us on his return from his rounds and drop us at the railway station. He had a patient at Hrinová. We were to start to meet him soon after five o'clock the next morning, and to be picked up near the station.

So we went to bed early, unclosing our shutters and opening the window on to the absolute darkness of the village street. The house was all on the ground floor. In the night I woke to hear a sound like the horn of a motor-car getting nearer and nearer, but very slowly. Surely no car could be going up towards the mountains in the middle of the night ! I jumped out of bed and went to the window. A light flashed on the walls of the room ; and I saw it came from a lantern carried

by a man who was walking beneath the trees in the middle of the wide village street. In the other hand he carried a cow's horn, which he blew at regular intervals; and a very picturesque figure he looked in the light of his own lantern, with his white skirts swinging as he strode along. In the morning I learned that this was the village watchman, who takes the place of street-lighting, and is quite ready to show anybody home after dark. The sound of his horn enables him to be found when needed.

We awoke before dawn, to hear the maid fetching water from the well outside our window. She brought us hot milk and black bread at five o'clock, and then acted as our escort to the station, for we would not have known the doctor if we had gone alone. It was a lovely autumn morning. We sat on a log by the roadside and waited. But when at last the doctor appeared in a waggonette, he said that one of his horses had gone lame, and that with only one horse he could not take an extra load on that rough journey. So there was no help for it, and we decided to visit an old Detvan, of whom we had been told, who lived quite close to the station. The bank manager had said that he often sat to Czech artists, and that he had begun to charge so much an hour for sitting, like a regular model; five or six crowns an hour would be about right.

We found his house, a very tumble-down cottage, with a small farmyard and sheds outside. The old man was looking after the cows, but was quite willing to sit to me for *twenty* crowns an hour (about 2s. 8d.). I did not want to spoil the market too much for the Czech artists, so I arranged for a compromise at twelve crowns. His grey hair was parted up the middle of the back, brought over the shoulders, and made into two plaits on each side, finished off with strips of leather at the ends. After a time he complained of feeling the cold wind, and wanted to finish the sitting indoors. The little room he took me into was very barely furnished, having only a rough table, two wooden chairs, a rough cupboard with plates in it,

and a very ancient Singer's pedal sewing-machine. To say it was stuffy conveys nothing. It felt as if the windows had not been opened for years, and it swarmed with flies. So I was glad to get out of it as soon as possible. The old man had a fine head, but it was clear he belonged to the period when education was very difficult to get, and he gave one the impression of having had a hard life.

He showed a glint of humour when I came to pay him, and he could not give me change for fifty crowns; but I fetched change from the booking-office, so his hopes were not wholly fulfilled.

He pleaded for "Just one more crown, for sweets for the grandchildren!" and I yielded the point, so we parted good friends. Then we took the train back to Zvolen.

PLATE XXVI

An Old Detvan, Slovakia

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PLATE XXVI

An Old Detvan, Slovakia

CHAPTER XXVI

WE spent a day at Kremnica on our way back from Zvolen. It was a very wet day, but we could not complain, as it was our first, after a month's travel. Kremnica is a lovely town at the bottom of a basin surrounded by high hills, but it stands itself 1680 feet above sea-level, and the railway station is 240 feet higher than the town. When we arrived, I enquired of the porter who booked our luggage whether there was an hotel omnibus, at which he laughed and slapped his legs and said, "*That* is the only omnibus here." He was a merry fellow altogether. He would give us no ticket for our luggage, but explained that he always remembered to whom each piece belonged, so it would be quite safe! When we got out at the back of the station we understood why there was no bus. The path descended steeply under trees, and was obviously only a footpath. The sides of the "basin" are clothed with beautiful trees, rich golds and browns and reds now appearing amongst the green. The path zigzagged down under the dripping boughs till at last it brought us to houses at the foot of the hill, and we soon found ourselves in front of the old town gate, of the year 1600, leading into the square.

The trees are so thick that it is not possible to see much of the town on the way from the station; otherwise we could not have failed to notice sooner the striking position of the great church, standing on the summit of a fortified hill, above the square.

On either side of the archway of the town gate is a carved stone figure; a miner on one side and a minter on the other. For Kremnica is a mining town; its gold and silver mines have been famous for centuries. All the Hungarian money

was coined there (or was supposed to be) and now it is the minting place for the Czechoslovak Republic. It is said that in olden times gold was so plentiful that grains of it used to be found in the crops of the chickens. What a temptation to the housewife to speculate in poultry !

. . . . . .

This is one of the oldest towns in Slovakia, for its first charter was granted by King Koloman in 1100. The Hussites held it for nine years from 1424. Unfortunately it was nearly burned to the ground in 1771, so most of the houses have been built since then.

We wanted to see the mint, and especially to go down a gold mine, so we made enquiries at a book shop as to where we ought to apply. The answer was: "Go to Ludovika." We did not know in the least what "Ludovika" stood for; but as our informant pointed northwards with his finger we started off hopefully, still in the pouring rain. Enquiring at intervals for the magic name, we found ourselves mounting and mounting, till we had risen by steep narrow streets right above all the houses, and still there was no "Ludovika" to be seen. Then we noticed some buildings off to the left, with a narrow road striking up the hill towards them. I pushed on ahead, leaving my friend to wait while I made more enquiries. The mud was terrible, but by this time we could hardly get much muddier. Yes, this was "Ludovika" at last! And I thus discovered that "she" was a gold mine. I handed in my letter of introduction, and soon we found ourselves in charge of a "machine-master," who would, they said, arrange for us to see as much as possible.

First we had to sign the usual papers absolving the mine authorities from all responsibility for any damage that might happen to us, and then we were told to be at the mint at one o'clock. The "Golden Stag" (Zlatý Jelen) of Kremnica provided us with an excellent lunch, and we liked the look of the hotel so much that we would gladly have stayed there several days.

At the mint we saw the whole process, including the cutting-out, cleaning and stamping. A quarter of a million nickel coins can be turned out in eight hours.

Many girls are employed in some of the processes. We were also shown beautiful designs for gold and silver medals which had been carried out at the mint.

Then our machine-master called for us, and we walked out of the town, towards the south this time, along a road which was more water than mud. He told us that the water required by Kremnica for industrial purposes was brought from the river Turec, 15 miles to the north, by an aqueduct which was built in the fourteenth century ; and that the mines were drained into the river Hron, 9½ miles to the south, by a tunnel which was constructed in the middle of the last century. There have been twelve gold mines, or " šachty," as he called them, but now there are only six worth counting. They are still very profitable, but nothing to what they were once. Before the war Ferdinand, the richest, had alone supplied 17 kilograms of gold in one month. Last year only 22 kilograms were extracted altogether. Of all these mines Ludovika had the deepest shaft, 1330 feet. (No wonder, we thought, when we had to climb so high to reach her mouth !) Ferdinand came next, then Francz, Michely and Maria. Anna, unfortunately, was deep under water, and we wondered why she was reckoned worth counting.

From Ferdinand five, six, seven, or even ten, grammes of gold can be extracted from every ton lifted ; from Ludovika it is useless to expect more than 2 grammes a ton. The machine-master talked tenderly of them, as if each one was a friend, and with such information beguiled the way till we reached what was known as No. IV Shaft.

It had been decided that the mines themselves were too wet and dirty for us to go down ; but we were to be taken down the shaft at the power station, which supplies electricity for all the mines, the lighting for Kremnica, and also for many of the surrounding towns—Zvolen, Lučenec and others. The

depth of the shaft is 780 feet, and it took four minutes to go down in the cage, a very rough and dirty lift, suitable for the work it has to do. We were given clothes to protect us before descending. I had the "Pan-direktor's" coat, and a little, round, black felt hat, which fitted on over my own. At first the inside of the shaft was of wood; then we descended into the stone, into the very heart of the mountain. We found ourselves in a large open space with galleries running off in several directions, and a terrific noise sounding all round us, so that we could not hear ourselves speak. The stone floor was partly of flags which could be lifted, and under these there flowed the canal which carried away the water from all the mines into the river Hron. Immediately out of this space, a mere hole in the mountain, wet and muddy, with everything in the rough, there opened a large room which made the greatest possible contrast. It was ceiled, walled, floored, to perfection, and everything in it was spotlessly clean and white. It contained the immense dynamos (960 horse-power), one of which was working and was responsible for the noise. Two workmen were in charge, and came and talked to us as we got a little more accustomed to the roar of the machinery.

The term stamping-mill was very unfamiliar to me before I read Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R.*, and there found the Czech equivalent of frequent occurrence. Now I was hearing the same word constantly used. The rough lumps of ore before they are crushed in the stamping-mill appear to be called "nuky," *i.e.* dumplings.

Coming back into the open space near the cage, we were shown the tramways, extending into the mountain, so we were told, for a distance of 11½ kilometres. A faint distant knocking sounded along the tunnel.

"What is that?" I asked.

"Oh, robotnici (workmen)," was the answer.

And again a vision of "Rossum's Universal Robots" flashed before my eyes.

Considering the number of workings there have been, and

the length of tunnelling connecting them, it is not surprising to learn that the whole of the town of Kremnica is undermined. The parish church formerly stood in the square, but ominous cracks appeared in its walls, so it was destroyed, and the ancient church in the castle, with a foundation dating from 1250, became the parish church. The oldest houses in the square are of the fourteenth century.

We sheltered from the heavy rain for a little while under the old gateway. Others were sheltering too, including a young couple who had evidently just arrived in the town. He was deformed and a cripple, with an intelligent but peevish face; she was of a simple peasant type, but beautiful in her tender devotion to him. Seeing a small crowd already gathered he pulled out an accordion and, sitting on the stone seat of the archway, he began to play—not, however, before his little wife had wrapped something round his legs and feet to keep him warm.

As soon as he began to play, his face changed entirely. We saw no longer the peevish invalid; his weak body was forgotten, as he swayed gently in time with the music, bringing forth from that humble instrument a vigour and a sweetness of which I had never suspected it to be capable. An old man standing near said, "To-morrow is the fair; they always come for that."

When the rain stopped later in the afternoon, we were able to go up the castle hill, noting its double row of mounds and ditches, and getting a glorious view of the town from outside the church at the top. Great flaming clouds, like pillars of fire, stood up above the tree-covered hills which form the brim of the basin, while the town at the bottom was in deep shadow. The square, through which we passed, was being prepared for the fair to be held on the morrow. Booths were being set up under the serried rows of prim little acacia trees, a type of tree very popular with municipal authorities, but rather suggesting "bobbed hair" in the way they are cut.

In the town hall there is a good museum. The archives

include two documents in Czech, written by the famous Jan Jiskra of Brandýs, in 1449. He maintained the Hussite cause in Slovakia for many years, during which time the use of the Czech Bible became prevalent.

When it grew dark we withdrew to the " Golden Stag " for supper, and then groped our way up the steep pathway to the railway station to take the train to Žilina.

CHAPTER XXVII

WE took final leave of Žilina and the Hotel Rémi on a beautiful October morning, and ran south-westward in the train, alongside of a very blue and peaceful Váh—so different from the turbid brown stream that we had followed in the spring. Budatín Castle looked lovely, with its ancient weather-worn tower seen across the river against a background of deep blue hills. To west, and south, and north, and east, hill beyond hill receded, finally vanishing into a tender blue haze. High Tatra was just visible under a few hovering clouds.

We passed through Hričov station, with its castle of the same name near by. We always think of this place as "the sneeze," for we were quite taken in when first we heard the porter call the name. And indeed it sounded astonishingly like a sneeze, with the "r" strongly rolled, and the accent, as always, on the first syllable.

Bytča-Predmier is the station for visiting the fantastic Sulov Rocks, which are reached after two or three hours' walking. The little village of Sulov lies hidden in a valley amongst the woods, and is proverbially unable to provide food for the passing traveller. The saying is, "Where the rocks begin, the bread ceases." So it is well to take one's own provisions. The rocks are wonderful sandstone peaks, which rise precipitously from the shining green slopes, and are weather-worn into a thousand fantastic shapes; and on them clings a ruined castle. They can also be reached from the station of Teplá Podhradie, by way of the Maninský Pass, a rather difficult path, but worth finding.

I had always wanted to visit Maninský Pass, but it came about at last almost by accident. One day we had alighted at

Teplá Podhradie to sketch the castle which here towers high above the river on the top of a conical hill. It was an April morning, starting with sunshine, but thick black clouds had gathered overhead, and before we were out of sight of the station the rain and hail came down with a vengeance. We ran for cover to an old shelter which had once been the starting-point for the ferry—a mere roof, on four posts, but it was better than nothing. Two men, pedlars, laden with baskets of every shape, size and description, followed us, and when the baskets were stacked round us we had little chance of getting wet. It was magnificent to watch the storm with flashes of lightning cutting across the inky sky, and to hear the thunder re-echoing round the hills. When it cleared, and the sun came out, we wanted a more distant view of the castle, which was now only separated from us by the river, and we started to walk southwards along the river-bank. A voice called to us from an upper window of the railway station: "That way is forbidden," so we obediently turned back. A young man came forward and regretted that he had had to stop us, because there was danger on account of recent floods. I asked if he was the stationmaster.

"No; the stationmaster's son."

"We wanted to get a view of the castle from a distance," said I.

"I can take you to a much better place, if you will let me."

So, always ready for any small adventure, we accepted, and he led the way eastwards along the village street. In the gardens of the houses great lengths of home-made linen were hung out on wooden frames to bleach. As we walked, our guide told us that he had finished his education in his own country, and was going out the following year to the United States, to learn to be a "special mechanic." He said with a smile, "In a year's time I shall be speaking English well." (At present he did not know a word.)

After the heavy rain, the mud in the roads was terrible,

and when we reached the spot from which we were to sketch the castle we found we should have to sit in the muddy road, and within reach of splashes from every ox-cart that passed. The view was too distant, and altogether it did not do. In the meantime a younger brother of our guide had joined us, and they asked us :

" Have you ever seen the Maninský Pass ? If not, we could take you there. It is not very far."

We were delighted at the suggestion, so we set off again, our path still rising as we left the road for the fields. A little rough building appeared on the green slope, and our guide said with enthusiasm, " Oh, you must come here ; it is mineral water." We had not noticed the name of the station particularly, but now we remembered it was *Teplá* Podhradie. Whenever the word Teplá (warm) occurs in a name, it indicates the presence of mineral springs. Inside the building there was a hole in the ground with dark stagnant water (or at least it *looked* stagnant) showing a little way down. They asked if we were thirsty.

" Oh no, not at all, thank you."

I offered my painting-cup, but one used his hand, and the other an old envelope from his pocket, and so they drank ; and we proved once more how difficult it is for the people of this country to understand it when strangers are not eager to " drink the waters." However, they were in no wise offended, and we journeyed on, always rising, sometimes through forest, sometimes over rough cleared ground. Our guide was a Sokol, and a member of the Tourist Club, and had camped a great deal in the neighbourhood. He said he knew every inch of it, and that he enjoyed nothing better than long country tramps.

After about two hours we reached the famous pass, where the rocks appear so near that there is only just room for a little stream to slip through. Our guide sprang nimbly up the steep rocky slopes ; we could not think what he was doing. Then he appeared with a bunch of delicate purple Pasque-

flowers, all covered with silver silky hairs, except on the purple petals, and handed us his trophy.

By the side of the stream we noticed a curious arch, reddish-brown in colour, stretching from the rock walls to the grassy slopes. Looking closer we saw that it was made of snow, last winter's snow still unmelted because the sun never reached it, but massed together and covered thick with russet leaves.

The rock walls towering above us showed ledges high up, on which trees were growing, but they looked infinitesimal from below, like mere twigs. We went through the narrow pass, jumping from rock to rock in the stream; but we had not time to go on to the Sulov Rocks that day, for we were returning to Prague by the night train. Our companions took us back to the station by another road, and saw us into the train for Žilina.

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But this all happened in April; it is another digression from our autumn journey.

PLATE XXVII

Maninský Pass, Slovakia

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PLATE XXVII

Manínský Pass, Slovakia

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CHAPTER XXVIII

AS we approached Trenčianská Teplá, where we had to change, we saw, on our right, wonderful bare rocks cutting the sky in the distance. They looked like silvery lace, for blue shadows in the crevices made a tracery of delicate lines. We understood now why these were called the *White* Carpathians. They remained in view all the way, and also after we had changed. At Teplá we had to wait some time, so we went and bought some ribbon in a queer general shop near the station. It appeared to be closed for the dinner-hour, for the door on to the street was barred, but through an archway into a courtyard an open back door could be reached, and everybody was going in that way! Teplá presents nothing of interest to a casual observer; it is merely the junction for Trenčianské Teplice. Not long after leaving Teplá, the train crosses the frontier into Moravia.

The country towards Veselí is very charming. Uherský Brod, where Komenský is said to have been born, stands picturesquely on a hill rising from the plains, and there we had arranged to spend the night. But we had a special reason for going on to Veselí first, and this needs a little explanation.

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The beautiful decorative paintings of flowers and leaves and birds on the whitewashed walls of the cottages in Moravia and Slovakia are unfortunately disappearing. We made constant enquiries in the districts where they used to be common; but, though we followed up every hint, we never found a really good spontaneous specimen.

When we were staying at Uherské Hradiště, we were told that in Kunovice, a neighbouring village, we should see some painted houses; but, on arriving there, we saw only dreadfully

dull conventional borders painted along the fronts of a row of new houses, and no amount of searching disclosed anything better.

At Luhačovice they have beautiful examples in the museum, so we inquired there as to where we could see similar work *in situ*. A retired school-teacher told us to go to Zarazice, where he had taught for sixteen years, and he was quite confident that we should still find the art being practised. So now we had arranged to leave the train at Veselí and to walk to Zarazice, which was only a mile away. The village was much like other villages, with low colour-washed houses on either side of a wide street, in which trees were planted. We found one little house with decoration over the windows, charming in its way, but extremely simple. The design included scarlet hearts with foliage growing out of them, blue and green leaves, and red berries. It was nothing to be compared with other designs we had seen photographed or in museums. An old lady was standing outside the house with a little boy in her arms. She told us that her daughter had said she *must* have a little decoration, and had done this herself straight away ; but she knew of no other house in the village with paintings. We went to the schoolhouse, and saw the teacher's wife, and from her also we could get no news of paintings, though we had certainly come to the right village, because she knew the ex-school-teacher who had sent us.

So we had to give up the search, and to go back to Uherský Brod where we were to spend the night.

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The hill on which the town stands rises steeply from the station to the square. Indeed, there are two principal squares, one just above the other, and both are on a steep slope and paved with uneven stones. We went to the Hotel Novák, in the lower square, the one recommended in the railway guide, and found it very comfortable. Two boys, a porter and a waiter, got us everything we needed ; perhaps the chamber-maids only stay during the busy season.

The next morning we had breakfast at seven, and from the windows we could see that the square was already full of people in gay dresses. We asked the waiter what it meant, and he said:

"Oh, it is always like that!"

Seeing we still looked puzzled, he added: "Always like that for a pilgrimage. Didn't you know? We thought you had come for the annual pilgrimage."

So we had "happened" on the pilgrimage! And that was why the people from the villages were pouring in, all in their festival attire, to spend the whole day in the town! This was just exactly what we had wanted to see, but no one had been able to give us the dates. We were told the church in the upper square was to be open all day, and there was to be a regular fair in the lower square. Such a curious mixture of religious observance and amusement! Rows of villagers, with baskets covered with embroidered handkerchiefs, were standing in front of the arcades, selling milk-cheeses, butter and eggs, before devoting themselves to the real business of the day. Very short full skirts are the fashion for the women in this part, and very bright colours; but the details of the dresses vary according to the village. We had heard much of the village of Vlčnov, an hour's walk from Uherský Brod, and we decided to go there after breakfast, to meet the people coming in.

It was perfect weather, sunny, with a soft breeze. The distant views of the hills and villages round the town were lovely, seen through every gap between the houses, and at the end of every street, from this commanding hilltop.

We descended into the plain, and found the road, bordered by fruit trees, with fields on either hand. The people were still pouring in, and we really began to wonder if any one would be left in Vlčnov by the time we reached it. The dress of the village was now familiar to us. Its most distinctive features are the great tassels of scarlet wool which men and

women alike wear on their waistcoats, three hanging down at the back, and two in front at the ends of the collar. The prevailing colour in the women's dress is scarlet. The men have dark blue or black trousers and waistcoats embroidered with narrow grey-blue braid, and three scarlet hearts across the back of the waistcoat. It was delightful to see these gaily coloured people walking along the sunny road under the fruit trees, and we never tired of watching them.

FIG. 10.—AN AGED PILGRIM FROM VLČNOV.

Presently we heard the sound of music, and after crossing a little bridge, and taking a field-path, we came suddenly on a gorgeous blaze of colour—a whole procession of Vlčnov people carrying banners and led by a band of wind instruments. The effect was indescribable. One cannot imagine a more brilliant mass of moving colour than they presented. The field-path growing narrower, we had to pass quite close to the procession as it threaded its way through the Indian corn, and so we could study it in detail. Every bit of rich embroidery, although it could not be fully appreciated in a moving mass, seemed to add its contribution to the whole effect. Nothing was thrown away.

In due time we came to Vlčnov, a pretty village, with a winding street and beautiful trees. A lady we met told us that there were still many of the villagers in the church, so we went straight there. A wonderful sight greeted us when we looked in at the church porch. The seats, which extended the whole length of the porch, were occupied by old men, and every one of them looked as if he had walked out of a mediæval picture. All had strong features, clean-shaven, tanned to the colour of mahogany, and dark or grey hair curling round the neck. Their heads were of course bare, but

they wore the thick white cloth overcoat, bound with red, which, in slightly differing forms, we see throughout Moravia and Slovakia. Underneath this could, in some cases, be seen the red and blue of the Vlčnov waistcoat. But it was their faces that struck us most. They beckoned us in, and offered us a share of their prayer books; however, the service was just over, and the women were already beginning to stream

Fig. 11.—Children at Uherský Brod.

out at a lower door. They had been kneeling in the nave of the church, and looked like a flower-garden, with their scarlet headkerchiefs, bright orange or pea-green aprons covered with roses, and red-tasselled waistcoats of black or white cloth. Many of them took off their long black boots as soon as they were out of the church, and carried them in their hands, to preserve them, on the walk to Uherský Brod. In some parts this is done even in the depths of winter.

On the way back we saw streams of men and women from

other villages all going in the same direction. The Hradčovice men wear dark blue cloth waistcoats and trousers, the waistcoat freely decorated with brass buttons; their shirts are embroidered with yellow, and they have yellow ribbons; the Hřavice men have silver buttons, blue embroidery and blue ribbons; and so on; each village is different. The women and girls of one village have stockings with red roses and green leaves all over them.

The ways of wearing the scarlet headkerchief are so many and varied that the painter Úprka has devoted a whole book to illustrating this subject alone. Each village has its traditional method of arranging it.

The fountain in the square outside our hotel was a great centre of attraction, for many had brought their food for the day with them, and depended on the fountain for drink. Up the hill, in a little garden outside the church, there was a well, worked by a large wheel, and the boys and girls were busy turning this all the afternoon. I went and sketched them at it, with the dappled sunlight falling on them through the trees. The people went in and out of the church continually. Everything was very quiet and orderly, and we moved about amongst the crowd quite freely. Even when I sat and sketched, no one took any notice.

We went into the museum, where there is a good collection of Komenský's books, and we saw the house where he is said to have been born, and to have lived one year from March 28th, 1592. But we had to ask many people before we found one who could point it out to us. Late in the afternoon a procession formed and marched round the squares, singing; quite an informal procession, joined by any one who pleased.

We were to leave that evening for Brno, and to pick up our luggage at Veselí, where the train stopped ten minutes. As I have said, we had no knowledge of the pilgrimage when we made our plans, and it was only when we reached the railway station that we first realized that by no means *all* of the pilgrims had come by road. The railway station was a

seething mass of humanity. It was a very slow process to get anywhere near the booking-office, and another long process to get away from it. When the train came in we were nowhere in the race. We waited quietly till the first rush was over; then we examined the train. And indeed we never saw such a train! It was literally swarming with people, wherever there was a square inch of foothold. Every carriage of every class was overflowing. We went to the stationmaster, and showed him our tickets, upon which he cleared a carriage in which there were about a dozen standing, and found us two seats. Evidently the officials are lenient on an occasion like this, and allow every carriage to be reckoned third class unless there is good reason for the contrary.

When we moved out of the station, many were left behind who had wanted to come; but we were loaded to the last limit. For a good many stations along the line, crowds continued to besiege the train. Apparently some of the people had walked part way home to lessen the fare. Every one was very good-tempered and orderly, and there was a good deal of singing, of course, seeing we were in gay Moravia.

At Veselí I wondered how I should get the luggage; but a travelling companion very kindly offered to come with me, so there was no difficulty at all.

All the way to Brno we were struck by the brilliant fireworks which the train provided for our entertainment; a perpetual display, with myriad stars, and fiery darts seen against the night-sky. We wondered if it was another speciality of the brown Bohemian coal, which is well known for the thick blackness of its smoke.

We had telegraphed to the hotel at Brno to reserve two rooms for us, using the very handy code which we had found in the railway guide. "Belab" is the code-word for "2 rooms, 2 beds," and we had used it before with perfect success. However, on reaching the hotel, and inquiring about the rooms, we found ourselves assailed with such a torrent of words by the hotel-porter that we were nearly carried away by it! We

gathered that he had reserved two rooms, with two beds *in each room*, and had expected four persons. This was very unreasonable, because the code goes on up to "Durbi=4 rooms, 9 beds," and no hotel could be expected to reserve four rooms with nine beds *in each room*! But we saw it would be no more use to reason with him than it would be to reason with an excited barking dog, so when he paused for breath I merely said in Czech :

"Can you not give us two single rooms ?"

And then the torrent began all over again as if I had not spoken ! Fortunately a young waiter who was passing stopped to listen and grasped the situation at once. Turning to us, he said in English, with a strong American accent :

"I think this mister does not know what he is talking about. There are plenty of rooms ; I will show you." And he took us straight upstairs to what we wanted. He told us he had lived in the States up to the time he was thirteen, and then three years ago had come to Czechoslovakia, his parents' original home.

Across the narrow street on to which our rooms looked there is a large Czechoslovak Club where a fancy-dress dance was going on, and the uncurtained windows showed us a whirl of Slovak colour, for most of the men and girls were wearing the national costume. It makes a very different impression when seen in the villages, worn as the spontaneous and natural expression of local taste and feeling. Even there it is becoming more and more consciously an inherited tradition, something of the past, rather than an expression of the present. And since everywhere the barriers are going down, and classes and races are mixing more and more, one can understand the instinctive desire of the peasant girl to outgrow the narrow limits of her village, and to wear clothes which seem to link her up to a larger world.

Before describing Brno and the remainder of our journey, I must refer to another famous Moravian town in the district where the national dress is worn.

CHAPTER XXIX

IT was on an earlier visit, in the spring, that, chiefly for the sake of the costumes, we had visited Uherské Hradiště, and had our first glimpse of Moravia. Its name means "Hungarian Castle-ward," and remains of ancient fortifications are still to be seen. We had written to the Grand Hotel for rooms, so the porter met us at the station. The name of the hotel was the only "grand" thing about it; but it was fairly comfortable, and at least we seemed to have it to ourselves.

Hradiště lies in the level valley of the Morava, and low hills rise on either side. There are many vineyards in the neighbourhood. It is not a strikingly beautiful situation, but peaceful and pleasant enough, with flat green meadows and budding fruit trees along the river-banks. Next morning we were wakened by a loud hammering in the house, and our request for hot water was met with a sad shake of the head. "You cannot have any this morning. The stove is not well." "Not well?" "No; the stove is broken." "Well what about breakfast?" we inquired anxiously. "Oh, that's all right. There is methylated spirit." Baths evaded us all along the way; but this was the first time hot water had failed us.

After breakfast we went to the police station to have our passports stamped, for though the regulations had been made less rigid, we were told it was still necessary to go.

On arriving there, we were sent from room to room; the officials were very polite, but they could not make out what on earth we wanted. *Why* did we want to have our passports stamped? We said, "Is it not necessary?" Then they asked us what we were doing in Hradiště, and, on hearing that

we came to paint, they plied us with questions as to the kind of subjects we would choose. One man, in a black astrakhan cap, asked if we were interested in pottery. But nobody seemed ready to stamp our passports. At last we were confronted by a big man, dressed much like an English farmer, who looked down at us, and said in very good English, " Well, and what's the trouble ? " We laughed, and explained. In a few moments everything was clear. Our passports only needed to be shown here if we were wanting a special permit to paint in some place not usually open to the public. " But why did they need to know if we were interested in pottery ? " said we. He smiled. " Oh, that was a man who has a pottery factory, and he thought you might like to see over it." He added politely, " When they sent for me to interpret I was walking in my garden. If I had known it was for two English ladies, I would have hurried."

We inquired about Dr Fr. Kretz, who had been director of the museum, and to whom we had an introduction, whereupon our interpreter and Engineer Stanzel, the pottery-maker, offered to take us to his house. There we were shown many very beautiful local embroideries, collected for the museum, now closed for want of funds.

Then we were taken over the potteries, about a mile from the town, and were shown the kilns, and every stage of the work. The potter, who turned a pot on the wheel while we watched, made a picture to be remembered. He was a thin, ascetic-looking man, very lightly clad, as lithe and agile as a panther, and with every thought fixed seriously on the shaping of his pot, as he held the plastic clay in his hands and regulated with his foot the speed of the wheel. His foot was cased in a large, soft, padded slipper for protection, and it urged on the wheel to lightning speed with a rapid succession of kicks. As he laid down the finished pot, he looked up for the first time, with a brilliant smile, and it was clear that he took an artist's pride in the work. In another room, the painters were busy copying old Slovak designs or carrying out their own. The

engineer's mother welcomed us into her house, where she proudly showed us a painting by Úprka on the plaster wall of the principal room—a Moravian bride and bridegroom in national dress under the blossoming fruit trees. She loaded us with apples from her last year's store when we took leave of her, and we found two little plates from the potteries had been slipped into our handbags.

That afternoon we went to paint in the courtyard of an ancient armoury, at least five hundred years old. It has been turned into tenement houses, but a battered Austrian eagle, with picturesquely faded colouring, still clings to existence outside the archway.

The children from the houses crowded round us. My little Czech-English dictionary was a great source of amusement to them. The first word they looked up was a natural one, "dět'átko," little child. The second surprised me—it was, "báječný," and the small schoolgirl read out solemnly the English meanings "fabulous, mythical." We wondered if she thought we were "fabulous monsters," but afterwards we found it was a word commonly used in Czech in a sense akin to "wonderful." They chattered away to us, quite contented if we understood about half of what they said.

Fig. 12.—Peasant in Winter Clothes, Uherský Ostroh.

We were rather disappointed in the dresses at Hradiště. The costumes are not worn correctly, though the young girls deck themselves out in very brilliant colours, and make gay splashes everywhere against the quiet background of the houses. The older folk look with much disapproval on this hybrid attire, but probably they are responsible in part, for so many of them have taken to "European" dress in the

larger towns. The girls get tired of wearing always the same colours, and vary them as much as they please; but even that is better than their turning to Western fashions.

The next day we went by train to a smaller and more picturesque town on the Morava, Uherský Ostroh, where we saw delightful specimens of the true costume on the older people, both men and women, as well as on the young girls. The dress is particularly bright and charming, and figures grouped on the bridge in the evening light, with the sixteenth-century castle in the background, left a lasting impression on our memories as we came away.

Our friend the "interpreter" called for us to show us the old parts of Hradiště. His garden wall is built along the top of the old fortification wall, whose massive stones, crowned with a huge rounded moulding, are easily distinguishable. Outside the town there are wide orchards of apple, pear and plum trees, hardly yet in bloom. Every house in the town has a certain portion of these orchards allotted to it; but there are no separating boundaries.

We learnt that though our friend was now a farmer, as a young man he had lived four years in London, with a post as foreign correspondent in the offices of the Great Eastern Railway Company. He remembered his life in London with great pleasure, and said he was always glad to help English people in return for the kindness he had received then. It was wonderful what good colloquial English he spoke, although he had had few opportunities to practise it for many years.

In politics he was a member of the powerful Agrarian party, which works in coalition with the Socialists and Social Democrats, "in order," he said, "to prevent them from doing much harm." He confessed himself to be one of a group of Fascisti, but he added: "We wield the pen, and not the sword. Our object is to maintain order, and to make a stand against lawlessness of every kind. We work by means of our own newspaper." He did not seem to approve of more violent methods.

PLATE XXIX

The Old Armoury, Uherské Hradiště, Moravia

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He spoke of agriculture. The sugar-beet industry is increasing rapidly in Czechoslovakia. The farmers now make contracts beforehand with the refiners, so they are safe if the price falls rapidly. The export of sugar, he said, was likely to be much greater in the future; and indeed it has nearly doubled itself in twelve months, since then.

In the afternoon he took us to Velehrad, said to be the place where St Cyril and St Methodius first preached Christianity in Moravia. It is a pleasant walk, along roads lined with fruit trees, and punctuated at intervals with farmhouses. The two great church spires reared into our view long before we actually reached the village. Carved on the stone base of a wayside cross, beneath the apple blossom, we noticed the chalice, the Hussite sign, which had still persisted through three hundred years of religious tyranny.

There is a great annual pilgrimage to Velehrad, and recently a huge hotel with one hundred and eighty guest rooms has been built to accommodate visitors. The church is seven hundred years old; but remains of a much older building were lately found, when a search was being made for the body of St Methodius who is said to have been buried there. Huge stone capitals, bases and parts of columns, beautifully decorated in the Byzantine style, were dug up, and we saw these in the museum. A stone sarcophagus, shown by the double cross to be that of a bishop, was also found, and it raised great hopes; but it was empty.

The Castle of Buchlov, seated on the summit of a peaked hill, can be seen from Velehrad, though it is several miles away.

When we returned to the hotel at Hradiště we found a concert was going on in the restaurant, and we gladly accepted the suggestion to have supper in our own rooms. The music and singing were kept up till four o'clock in the morning—not at all an unusual hour in these parts, I believe; but everything was perfectly orderly.

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Buchlov Castle, which we had seen from Velehrad, is rather

too far to walk from Hradiště, so we asked our Moravian friend where we could get a carriage. He did not know of any for hire, but he borrowed a carriage and a pair of roans from a friend of his, a doctor, and lent us his own man as driver. He said he would have driven us himself but he had an important political meeting to attend. Another friend of his, who had business in the village of Buchlovice, came with us. It had turned very cold, with a biting wind, and was inclined to snow. Our driver, who wore a blue-grey overcoat, with a brown sheepskin collar, turned the collar up so high in his endeavour to keep warm that it lifted his hat off his head. He drove like a Jehu along the level roads.

The castle stands on a hill 1700 feet high, the higher of a pair of hills above the village of Buchlovice, and we had to drive, by a long zigzag road, up the sides of the lower hill in order to reach the higher one and the castle. The lower hill is covered with glorious woods, chiefly tall, slender beech trees, rising from a rich brown carpet of last year's leaves. On the banks of the little stream, which we were tracing upwards, there grew masses of lungwort, bright blue in flower, bright pink in bud; also bushes of daphne with fragrant rose-coloured blossoms on the nearly leafless stems. The road was indescribably bad. We swayed into deep ruts, and jolted over stones, making the third member of our party keep up a chant of "Pomalu! Pomalu!" (Slowly! Slowly!) addressed to the driver at the top of his voice. We left the carriage below the last steep rise to the castle, and walked up into the courtyard. Opening out of it was a large kitchen where we were given coffee and rolls. A nice-looking, brown-eyed, white-haired woman was busy at the stove. Her small child, only three or four years old, was helping an old woman and a servant girl to shell walnuts for making cakes. The picturesque costumes and the old-fashioned room with its shining pots and pans made a delightful picture. Then we were taken over the castle, which dates from the sixteenth century, and is perfectly preserved, including the surrounding walls and towers.

In the large old hall, with windows glazed with roundels, there are portraits of the earliest owners. A fine lime tree growing close under the walls is pointed out as having been planted upside down by a man who had been condemned to death for infringing the game-laws. It sent out roots and grew, and this was reckoned to prove his innocence, so he was set free.

Close to it is a stone table where those who were condemned for breaking the game-laws were given their last meal, in the days when game was valued more highly than human life.

In the upper rooms are museum-collections of every kind. There is no place like Bohemia for museums.

That evening our Moravian friend invited us to his house to a little supper-party, where nearly everything was home-made or home-grown, including a spring turkey, and some of the wonderful cakes for which Bohemian housewives are famous. We were leaving Hradiště on the following day.

CHAPTER XXX

BRNO, the capital of Moravia, is a fine town, a busy industrial centre, and the second city of the Republic. It has now a Czech University, named after President Masaryk. The Spielberg fortress, on the top of a tree-covered conical hill, towers above the streets. It was used as a prison for political offenders up to the last century, and its gloomy dungeons are in themselves an indictment of the methods of "justice" of those days. Czech patriots, including students, were imprisoned there by the Austrian Government during the Great War. Now the main building is occupied as barracks.

We climbed the winding path up the hill, under a gorgeous canopy of autumn leaves, were admitted to the fortress, and then left free to wander as we pleased in the "casemates." After a time, a guide arrived with candles, and lighted the way through the series of dungeons which open out of the huge casemate tunnels. Silvio Pellico, the Italian patriot and writer, forerunner of Mazzini, was confined in one of them by the Austrian Government for eight years (1822–1830) on account of his political views, and after his release he wrote a moving description of his prison life.

A beautiful view of the whole city, and beyond to the Carpathians, is to be had from a terrace outside the fortress.

Two ladies who had been round the dungeons with us were also on the terrace. They told us that they were first cousins; and since one lived in Brno with a Czech father and only spoke Czech, and the other lived in Vienna with a German father and only spoke German, they were arranging to exchange visits, that each might learn the other's language. At present neither

could understand what the other said. This pleasant arrangement seemed a good augury for a closer relationship between the two races, now that the Czech tongue has regained its prestige, as the official language of a Government. Germans seldom took the trouble to learn it before.

The foundation of Brno goes back probably to about 800; but its most ancient buildings are of the sixteenth century. The beautiful old Gothic Church of St Jacob was begun in 1502. Of the original town hall of the same period nothing remains but one very remarkable doorway, with five life-sized statues of saints and angels under richly decorated pinnacled canopies.

The narrow cobbled lanes and uneven market-places of the old town make a great contrast with the modern suburbs.

The vegetable market, held in the shadow of old buildings, and with the huge gay umbrellas of the market women spread out over the vegetables, provides a riot of colour, especially when the dark stone of the sculptured fountain in the centre is festooned with scarlet and orange Virginian creeper.

While in Brno we went to see a play by the Czech dramatist, Langer, who is very popular in his own country. It was called *The Camel and the Needle's Eye*; we found it very interesting as a sort of self-portrait of Czech life; but artistically it did not convince us, as the plays of Čapek do.

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We had heard such glowing accounts of the caves at Macocha, near Brno, that we were inclined to doubt if the reality could ever reach the height of the descriptions. The only way was to go and judge for ourselves.

Most people have heard of the famous Karst district extending along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, where the limestone rock abounds in caverns, clefts and "swallow-holes," with underground lakes and rivers. But less well known is the similar limestone region of Moravia. Indeed, the best of the caves there have only recently been discovered by Dr Absolon. We have in England something of the same

kind on a smaller scale, in the caves and swallow-holes of Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Somerset.

We left Brno by the eight o'clock morning train, taking our luggage with us to book it at Blansko and pick it up again in the evening, for we wanted to spend that night at Hradec Králové.

At Blansko we found a motor-coach waiting not far from the station. There were only a few other passengers, so we were told we must take return tickets, because otherwise the journey would not pay expenses. For more than thirty miles north of Brno the railway follows the lovely wooded valley of the river Svitava, crossing and recrossing it, and passing through tunnel after tunnel in quick succession. At Blansko, the Svitava is joined by a tributary, the Punkva, and it was this stream that we were to trace to its source. The weather was perfect, and as soon as we had got beyond the iron foundries of the district the road we followed was very beautiful, with steep wooded banks on one side or the other. The young oaks were already brilliant orange or scarlet, and other trees were just beginning to turn. We passed a restaurant called "Skalní Mlýn," or Rock Mill, and the driver told us that the host had lived in America, and spoke English well. The white limestone walls of rock were already beginning to close us in on both sides when we stopped at the first cave, St Catherine's, at the entrance to which a guide was waiting.

The huge size of the cave is what strikes one first, on entering. It is lighted with electric light, and four thousand candle-power is necessary to break the gloom. There is no denying that it is marvellously beautiful, with glistening columns, and snow-white statuary of every imaginable shape, all formed patiently, drop by drop, in the darkness, during thousands of years, and long hidden from every human eye. The guide amuses himself by drawing attention to quaint resemblances to human forms, to hanging curtains, pancakes, mushrooms and mice till we feel we must have joined "Alice in Wonderland" and quite expect to see the Mock Turtle and

the Griffin round the next corner. Next we return to the road and follow up the river Punkva until it is seen to emerge from a hole in the rock wall, and we find that much of its upper course is underground, in the heart of the rock, whence it appears again only at intervals. At the entrance to what are known as the Punkva Water Caves, there is a boat waiting for us and we are taken into the midst of this mysterious succession of chambers, with the water lapping on their walls, and with the roof sometimes so low that we have to dip our heads, sometimes so high that we seem hardly to see where it ends. Here, again, there are great columns supporting the roof, and strange fantastic shapes on every side, with carefully hidden electric lights arranged to show them to the best advantage. The whole is reflected in the clear water, and makes a very fairy-land of beauty. In some parts the depth of the water is as much as 100 feet! Think of it; ten times the height of an ordinary room!

Perhaps the most wonderful of the caves is the Masaryk Hall, discovered in 1920. There is such a delicacy and purity in the stalactite formations here. The whole effect is like that of frozen rain; as if heavily streaming rain, falling in straight, vertical lines, had suddenly been turned into glittering ice. There are larger, more massive shapes as well, but the chief peculiarity of the cave is in these delicate vertical lines.

So we proceed, through cave after cave, until at last we come out to the bottom of the Macocha abyss. Macocha means "stepmother," and there is a legend about the place which is supposed to account for the name; a story of a jealous stepmother who pushed her little stepson over the cliff, because she could not bear to see him strong and well when her own child was always ailing. The boy was caught in the branches of a tree and was rescued unharmed by charcoal-burners; the stepmother went home to find her own son, dead.

The place has no need of tragic stories to make it awe-inspiring. The cliff descends sheer for nearly 500 feet. It is like a vast chamber, open only to the sky at the top. We

look up to the trees on the edge of the precipice, and so small they seem that we can hardly believe them to be trees. They are golden in the sunlight, while to the spot where we stand no sunshine can ever penetrate. A pool, whose water is a brilliant blue-green, lies at the foot of the cliff, and we are told it is 45 feet deep, and that out of it the river Punkva flows. The rocks are clothed with rich green growth of various kinds. Before the discovery of the caves through which we have come, it was only possible to reach the bottom of the abyss by means of an iron ladder, which is still to be seen leading down from the top.

It is said that in ages past the whole of the Macocha abyss was a huge subterranean cave, whose roof was a dome which has now fallen inwards, leaving its mighty walls open to the sky. This region is a valuable asset to the Republic, for it draws thousands of visitors every year. The whole mountain is honeycombed with caves, and fresh ones are opened up by blasting away the rock that interrupts the chain.

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The time had now come for the return journey to Blansko, but we had heard of Sloup, 7 kilometres (or was it miles ?) farther on, so we enquired if it would be possible to hire a car there to bring us back to catch the evening train. The guide advised us to ask Mr Hrozník at the Skalní Mlýn. From him we learnt that it was a two hours' walk to Sloup, and he gave us a note to a friend of his at an inn there who could let us have a carriage for the return journey. He started with us along the road, giving us the opportunity of asking more questions about the caves, and showing us the way that led to the summit of the abyss. Thick woods and high rock walls shut in the road at first ; then gradually it opened out, and we heard the shouts of woodmen, encouraging their horses to drag the heavy logs. We met not a soul on the road apart from these. There were squirrels and birds in plenty, stirring among the autumn leaves, and these were the best of company for us.

A mile or so from Sloup we came upon the inn where we

47. ROCKS NEAR SLOUP

were to deliver our note; but the maid who took it told us her master was away, and would not be back till nightfall. There was nothing for it but to walk on to the little town and make arrangements there. We were close to the entrance to the Sloup caves and the museum, and to the great isolated mass of glittering rock known as "The Comb," rising a sheer 70 feet above us; but we did not venture into the caves until we had made sure of a conveyance. At the first inn the woman who came to the door offered us no hope, either of a meal or a carriage; the next was no better; and a third we could not find. It seemed as if we should have to walk back at once the way we had come, and, even so, that we could hardly catch our train. We turned our faces in that direction, but hardly had we started when we heard shouts behind us, and, looking back, saw a man waving to us to return. It appears that he had engaged a country cart (žebřiňák) to take him to Rajec, a station 6 kilometres north of Blansko, and hearing of our enquiries, he had followed us, to ask us to share it. We told him our luggage was at Blansko, and that we wanted to catch the northward express which did not stop at Rajec; but he assured us with such confidence that everything could be arranged perfectly that we caught his confidence and did not trouble about the details. Of course we could not see the Sloup caves, but we were told they were not equal to those we had seen already, and that the smoke of the torches of many generations had sullied their whiteness.

There was now plenty of time. I first drove in the cart to fetch my sketching things, which I had hidden in the grass near the caves, and our new friend meanwhile ordered some refreshments at the inn, and was more successful than we had been. How we did enjoy that drive! The very smell of the hay into which we sank luxuriously added to the enchantment. So did the gratitude we felt for having been so well provided for. The road ran first through open country, agricultural, but with large fields instead of a striped carpet. The rays of the sun glittered on myriad cobwebs, which linked

up all the growth with silvery threads. Then we rattled through thick forests of firs, past a forester's house, hidden comfortably in their midst; and, emerging, we came in view of lovely mountains, range beyond range, with the sun dropping down behind them in a brilliant golden haze.

Our friend, on the (hay) box with the driver, told us what we should pay—a very small sum—and explained that it was half what he had bargained for before we had appeared. We took him to be a commercial traveller, well used to the roads.

At Rajec he explained our needs to the station officials, who gathered round sympathetically and took us in hand, making our business their own. We had to fill in a form or two, and there was some telephoning, and then we were told our luggage would reach Hradec Králové in the same train as we did. Finally, we were shown into a train which brought us to Skalice, where the express was due to stop.

And so our day at Macocha ended, with a strengthened sense of the kindness and courtesy of the whole community, as well as with a tribute to those who had told us that we must not miss a visit to the Moravian Karst.

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Hradec Králové is an example of an ancient town turned into a busy modern industrial centre. In the Middle Ages it was the residence of the widowed Queens of Bohemia. Its wonderful historic walls were removed because they hampered its growth; but the old Gothic cathedral, dating from 1303, and the lofty "White Tower" still give great dignity to the square in the centre of the town.

In this neighbourhood was fought, in 1866, the sanguinary battle between the Austrians and the Prussians, in which the Austrians were wholly defeated, and Prussia became henceforth the dominant power. It is better known as the battle of Königgrätz (the German name for Hradec Králové) or as the battle of Sadowa.

From Hradec Králové we visited Náchod, near the north-

48. THE CHURCH AND CASTLE, NÁCHOD

eastern borders of Bohemia, in the valley of the river Metuje. Its most striking features are the Church of St Lawrence in the square, and the castle which overlooks it from a height. The upper portions of the two quaint towers of the church are made entirely of wood. It is mentioned as the parish church in documents of 1350.

A dressmaker in the square kindly allowed me to sketch the church and castle from her showroom window on the first floor. Afterwards we climbed the steep tree-covered hill to the castle, by shady winding paths.

This neighbourhood has a double claim to interest from its literary associations. About two hours' walk westward is Ratibořice on the Úpa, with the so-called "Grandmother's Valley," the scene of the celebrated novel *Babička* (The Grandmother) by Božena Němcová—a touching story of peasant life.

About the same distance northward is Hronov, the birthplace and home of Alois Jirásek, who has been called the "Walter Scott" of Bohemia. His historical novels have had a great influence in reviving the memory of the heroic past, and his famous speech in Prague in April 1918, to an audience of six thousand, gave a fresh inspiration to the struggle for liberty. His seventieth birthday (August 23rd, 1922) was kept as a national fête.

CHAPTER XXXI

TO call a place in cold blood, a "Paradise," is to challenge scepticism. It needs to be beautiful indeed to rise superior to such a name. But in this case the title is justified. There is a subtle charm about the whole district, a magic quality which beggars all description.

It is in the north-east of Bohemia that we must seek this "Paradise," where a smiling region of meadows, woods and streams is intersected by very remarkable sandstone ridges, broken up into fantastic columns and figures.

On the south, the town of Jičín forms its gateway—Jičín, which was once the capital of the vast dominions of Valdštejn, Duke of Friedland. We cannot see Jičín without thinking of him. His life and character seem full of contradictions, which can perhaps only be explained by his one governing motive of self-interest. He was a Bohemian, yet he acquired an enormous fortune when the estates of the Bohemian nobles were being confiscated in 1620. He was a successful general of the Romanist forces during the Thirty Years War, yet his protests against anti-Protestant legislation caused him for a time to be deprived of his command. There seems no doubt that he was hoping for the crown of Bohemia, and to this end he held secret negotiations with the Bohemian exiles, and declared himself in favour of religious liberty. But he finally fell a victim to his own intrigues, and was assassinated by Irish officers in the imperial service.

Palacký, after gazing silently at his monument in Vienna, uttered merely the one word: "Scoundrel!"

Here in Jičín there is much to recall his princely splendour —the magnificent castle, and the Church of St Jacob, both

on the town square, and the far-famed avenue of lime trees, 2 kilometres long, leading to the Libosad or Park. The lime tree has been the sacred tree of the Slavs from pagan times, and it may be that the wily adventurer was appealing to the national sentiment in thus planting twelve hundred of them on his estate. He had his own mint here in Jičín. His castle is now used for State Offices and for the district Law Courts. The square in which it stands is remarkable in being completely surrounded by arcades. The ancient gate tower dates from 1578.

We came to Jičín from Hradec Králové, and after seeing something of the town we took a carriage to the Prachov Rocks, starting along the main road to Sobotky, and turning off to a side track at Lochov. The country is like one large garden of fruit trees; the soil is sandy, and lighter in colour than any we had yet seen in Bohemia. We could trace the great ridge of sandstone rocks along the horizon on our right. The ground rose rapidly after Lochov, and we were now in a narrow lane amongst cottages and trees, with beautiful grassy orchards, and heaps of red and golden apples lying ready for carting.

At last we stopped at a house close under the ridge, the *pension* of the Jičín Tourist Society, where we had to leave the carriage and continue on foot. After following a field-path for a little way we found ourselves at the entrance to the marvellous maze of rock-columns, with steps ascending amongst the fir trees, and finally bringing us almost to the level of their summits. It is possible to walk for at least seven or eight miles amongst these Prachov rocks without covering the same ground twice, and without exhausting the variety of forms and groupings which they have to show us. Described as bare rocks, they may not sound very attractive to anyone who has not seen them, but, once in their midst, we find they have a charm all their own.

Beautiful glimpses of distant hill and valley are seen in between the pillars, and we overlook wide vistas of the whole smiling country. Then, again, we dip down into cool dark

recesses where only these silent giants can be seen standing round us, and where the thick sandy dust smothers the slightest sound of our feet. We feel as if amongst the columns of a vast cathedral, and our voices sink instinctively to whispers. Or we may find ourselves between two high rock walls, with barely space to walk, or at the mouth of an unexpected cavern.

In prehistoric times ramparts were thrown up around this labyrinth of rocks; six different ones have been discovered. It would indeed form an impregnable fastness for a band of robbers.

Prachov means "dusty," and it is well named, for it seems always dry on these sandy ridges. They extend under different names for twenty to thirty miles north-westward of Jičín, to Turnov and beyond. It is only a run of an hour and a half in the train from Jičín to Turnov, which we made our next centre.

Turnov is the north-western gateway to the Bohemian Paradise—an ancient town, which, through the centuries, has suffered much from war, even as recently as 1866. It has long been famous for its precious stones and its jewellery school, and necklaces of Bohemian garnets are prominent in the shop windows.

On account of the beauty of the neighbourhood in every direction, it is a very active tourist centre, but when we were there the holiday season was quite over. We certainly could not have seen the "Paradise" under more beautiful conditions at any time of year.

We drove southward to the Castle of Trosky, along a road overshadowed with yellowing lime trees. On our right ran the railway, beyond that the Libunka stream, and beyond that again rose the rocky sandstone ridge, making three lines, roughly parallel with the road we were on. Rich green meadow land lay on either side of the river.

We passed the look-out tower of Hlavatice, from which the hill of Řip and the Middle Mountains (Středohoří) are to be seen; then the Castle of Valdštejn, clinging marvellously to the rock

PLATE XXX

Among the Prachov Rocks, Bohemia

recesses where only these silent giants can be seen standing round us, and where the thick sandy dust smothers the slightest sound of our feet. We feel as if amongst the columns of a vast cathedral, and our voices sink instinctively to whispers. Or we may find ourselves between two high rock walls, with barely space to walk, or at the mouth of an unexpected cavern.

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Jessie Matterdale

pinnacles, and reached by bridges across chasms in the rock; past the "Rock Town," and so to Hrubá Skála (Big Rock).

Here we turned to the right, following a road which became steeper and steeper. We were climbing to the top of the ridge. Soon we had nothing but trees on either side, as the road made long zigzags up the hill. When we reached the top, the sandstone pillars stood round us, in marvellous variety of form, and the view was magnificent; right over the heads of the columns, and over the tops of the trees on the hillside up which we had climbed, we could see to the distant mountains, and the foliage of the trees below us made a rich sea of golden, russet and crimson.

Here at Hrubá Skála there is a castle and a church as well as a big hotel and a restaurant. We could not stop to explore the horrible dungeons of the castle and its subterraneous passages if we were to have plenty of time at Trosky, so after lunching on the terrace we descended the hill by another road.

Trosky soon appeared in the dim distance, and its unmistakable twin towers held our gaze off and on for the rest of the way. The road runs through rich fruit lands, with fish-ponds here and there, and marvellous beauty of hill and valley and fantastic rock. At the village of Tachov, just under Trosky, we left the carriage, and came by a field-path to this wonderful ruin. It is difficult to explain its fascination. I had seen some photographs which were very impressive, but they conveyed only a faint idea of the reality. It consists of two castles, built on two adjacent peaks of volcanic rock, which rise abruptly to a height of 150 and 180 feet above the surrounding level. The two castles are joined by a great wall. The higher is known as Panna, or the Maiden; the lower as Baba, or the Old Woman. These are not among the oldest of the castles of North Bohemia, for they were only built in the fourteenth century. In 1439 Žižka's army in vain tried to take them.

I had asked our boy-driver if it was possible to go up to the top of the castles. He grinned and said, "Not with the horses," and then I realized I had used by mistake the verb

which means "to go (in a carriage)." But we were able to go to the top of Panna on foot, and to see the whole Bohemian Paradise spread out below us.

We studied Trosky from various points of view, wandering in and out amongst the orchards and the small farmhouses. Finally a dear old farm wife gave us leave to sit in the orchard at the back of her house. But she was not content with that; she loaded us with good things also, giving us pears and apples from the orchard, and bringing out cakes hot from the oven. The cottages and barns hereabouts are built of logs laid horizontally, and filled up in between with white plaster. The logs are coloured yellow-ochre; thus giving the effect of horizontal stripes of white and yellow. The roofs are very often thatched. The farmer returned from the field when we were just leaving, with his cart drawn by two solemn, large-eyed oxen, who appeared to be family pets. The whole picture, including the old woman standing in the doorway, was very charming.

Near Trosky is the small town of Rovensko, the scene of much persecution after the battle of Bílá Hora, when many of the Hussites fled and hid themselves in inaccessible spots in the forests near Turnov. One of their refuges bears the name of Kalich or The Cup.

At Rovensko the wooden cottages are gradually giving place to modern houses. The wooden bell-tower of the church is worth seeing. It is eight-sided on the ground floor, and four-sided in the upper story—just the opposite of the Ruthenian bell-tower at Jasiňa. The bells are hung mouth upwards, and are rung by means of treadles, worked with the feet.

Rovensko has been known to history since 1178. The story goes that it was famous for the manufacture of arrows, and in the fourteenth century, when Charles IV was king, it fell on bad times—whether because that king's policy encouraged the limitation of armaments, I cannot say. Charles stayed there to see about having some fish-ponds made, and the chief woman of the little town took the opportunity of asking him to relieve

49. THE CASTLE OF TROSKY, IN THE BOHEMIAN PARADISE

their poverty. At the same time she offered him a very beautiful kind of amethyst. He was surprised, accepted the amethyst, and promised to help them. Then he sent for grinders and polishers from Italy, who found semi-precious stones in the quarries, ground and polished them, and taught the people how to carry on the work in their homes. Thus were obtained the precious stones which are inlaid in the walls of the chapel of St Venceslas in the cathedral at Prague, and of the chapels of Karlův Týn. A great many were also exported to Italy. The polishing and sale of stones still goes on; but it is a much less important industry now than formerly. Rovensko's situation in the midst of the Bohemian Paradise is to-day its chief asset.

There are still fish-ponds in the neighbourhood. The breeding of fish is another very old and important industry in Bohemia, and the fish-ponds are quite a feature of the country, especially in the south. In a land with no access to the sea, it was the only way of obtaining fish in any quantity.

The journey back to Turnov in the evening was almost more beautiful than the morning drive had been. We went by a different road, past more fish-ponds in which we saw the twin-towers of Trosky reflected, and past yet more rocks, with strange names and stranger shapes.

That evening we attended a concert and lecture at Turnov, given to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Žižka. We were rather late in hearing of it, so we only arrived just before the hour for beginning, and all seats were filled except in a special box where the Mayor and other functionaries were already seated. We mixed with the crowd standing at the back, and were quite prepared to have remained there; but very soon a messenger was sent to fetch us, and we were given seats in the box merely because we were "strangers." We were known to no one in the town, and we were once again struck by the quickness in recognizing strangers and the kindness in looking after them.

A lecture on the great warrior occupied an hour or so,

delivered without a note, and with wonderful fluency. Then followed the singing, by a choir, of the stirring Hussite war song, "All ye warriors of God," and of other famous songs, ending with the Czech national anthem, "Kde domov můj ?" ("Where is my home ?")

These words, so beautifully sung, seemed like the closing notes of a mighty chorus which the whole hospitable land had been singing to us since first we entered it. They were written during the period of the national revival, and, even in an indifferent translation, one can feel the pent-up enthusiasm of the oppressed people, surging through every line and presaging their future freedom :

"Where is my house ? where is my home ?
Streams among the meadows creeping,
Brooks from rock to rock are leaping,
Everywhere bloom spring and flowers
Within this paradise of ours ;
There, 'tis there, the beauteous land !
Bohemia, my fatherland !
Where is my house ? where is my home ?
Knowst thou the country loved of God,
Where noble souls in well-shaped forms reside,
Where the free glance crushes the foeman's pride ?
There wilt thou find of Czechs, the honoured race,
Among the Czechs be aye my dwelling-place."

. . . . . .

Yet these passionate lines belong too much to the Romantic school to satisfy Masaryk the Realist and his followers. Theirs is a world-wide vision. They have seen that true patriotism cannot be separated from a love of all humanity.

. . . . . .

The words of Beneš are significant :

"We need not fear for our existence, if we always defend it in the spirit of the ideals of the national uprising which led us to victory."

Surely Czechoslovakia has a great future before her. . . .

CHAPTER XXXII

Conclusion

THE unconquerable ideal towards which mankind is striving could not be more clearly expressed than in the following words (from the *Times* of May 23rd, 1925), which throw light on the pathway long-sought and followed by all the greatest leaders of the Czechoslovak nation :

"All true government must rest on spiritual sanctions. Law, commerce, wealth, military power cannot secure any nation's true well-being. We are slowly learning that, just as man cannot live by bread alone, so neither can any nation live by its material resources. . . . Co-operation ultimately depends on spiritual affinities. . . . Different races do not maintain harmony amongst themselves merely under the impulse of a common policy secured by their hope of gain. True unity in a nation, or fellowship between different peoples, depends on the recognition of those eternal verities of righteousness, brotherhood and mutual service, in obedience to which men attain freedom to be their best, and count nothing higher than to share their liberty with others."

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF RULERS IN BOHEMIA AND HUNGARY

(Rulers who held sway over both Bohemia and Slovakia, at least for a time, are shown in larger type.)

Prince of Great Moravia

SVATOPLUK

Přemyslid Princes of Bohemia	
Bořivoj I	
Spytihněv I	
Vratislav I	
Venceslas I	*c.* 921–29
BOLESLAV I	929–67
BOLESLAV II	967–99
Boleslav III	999–1002
Vladivoj (Polish)	1002–3
Jaromir	1003–12
Ulrich	1012–37
Brětislav I	1037–55
[Moravia reunited to the Bohemian Crown]	
Spytihněv II	1055–61
Vratislav II (King)	1061–92
Conrad	1092
Brětislav II	1092–1100
Bořivoj II	1100–1107
Svatopluk	1107–9
Vladislav I	1109–25
Soběslav I	1125–40
Vladislav II	1140–73
Ten different rulers in the 24 years	1173–97
Přemysl Otakar I	1197–1230

Kings of Bohemia	
Venceslas I	1230–53
PŘEMYSL OTAKAR II	1253–78

Dukes of Hungary	
Árpád	889–907
Zoltán	907–47
Taksony	947–72
Geyza	972–97
Vaik (afterwards Stephen I)	997–1000

Kings of Hungary.	
Stephen I	1000–1038
Peter	1038–41
Aba Samú	1041–44
Peter (again)	1044–47
Andrew I	1047–61
Béla I	1061–63
Solomon	1063–74
Geyza I	1074–77
Ladislaus I	1077–95
Koloman the Learned	1095–1114
Stephen II	1114–31
Béla II	1131–41
Geyza II	1141–61
Stephen III	1161–2
Ladislaus II and Stephen IV	1162
Stephen III (again)	1162–73
Béla III	1173–96
Emeric	1196–1204
Ladislaus III	1204–5
Andrew II	1205–35
Béla IV	1235–70
Stephen V	1270–2
Ladislaus IV	1272–90

Kings of Bohemia.

	Venceslas II	1278–1305
	VENCESLAS III, last of the Přemyslids.	1305–6
	Rudolph of Hapsburg	1306–7
	Henry of Carinthia	1307–10
House of Luxembourg	John, married Elizabeth, daughter of Venceslas II	1310–46
House of Luxembourg	Charles I (IV)	1346–78
House of Luxembourg	Venceslas IV	1378–1419
House of Luxembourg	SIGISMUND	1419–37
	ALBERT of AUSTRIA, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sigismund.	1437–39
	[George of Poděbrad, Regent]	
	LADISLAS POSTHUMUS, son of Albert	1440–57
	George of Poděbrad	1458–71
Polish	VLADISLAV II	1471–1516
Polish	LOUIS I of Bohemia (II. of Hungary), killed after victory of Turks at Mohács.	1516–26

Kings of Hungary.

Andrew III (last of the Árpáds)	1290–1301
VENCESLAS III	1302–5
Otho, Duke of Bavaria	1305–8
Karl Robert of Anjou	1308–42
[*Matthias Čák ruled in Slovakia* about	1306–18]
Louis I, the Great	1342–82
Maria	1382–5
Charles II	1385–6
SIGISMUND	1386–1437
ALBERT of AUSTRIA	1437–39
(Elizabeth, his widow)	1439–42
(Uladislaus of Poland)	1442–44
[John Hunyadi, Regent]	1446–52
LADISLAS POSTHUMUS	1453–57
[*Jan Jiskra of Brandýs ruled in Slovakia about*	1439–62]
Matthias Hunyadi (Corvinus)	1458–90
VLADISLAV II	1490–1516
LOUIS II	1516–26

Hapsburg Rulers, Emperors of Austria

FERDINAND I (opposed in Hungary by John Zápolský)	1526–64
MAXIMILIAN (opposed in Hungary by Sigismund Zápolský)	1564–76
RUDOLPH II	1576–1612
MATTHEW	1612–19
Frederick, Elector-Palatine, the "Winter King" of Bohemia, 1619–20	
FERDINAND II, 1620–37; in Hungary (opposed by Gabriel Bethlen)	1619–37
FERDINAND III (opposed in Hungary by George Rákóczy, I and II)	1637–57
LEOPOLD I (Turks driven out of Hungary about 1699)	1657–1705
JOSEPH I	1705–11
CHARLES II of Bohemia, VI as Emperor, III of Hungary	1711–40
MARIA THERESA	1740–78
Charles of Bavaria, King of Bohemia, 1741–45	
JOSEPH II	1780–90
LEOPOLD II	1790–2
FRANCIS	1792–1835
FERDINAND IV.	1835–48
FRANCIS JOSEPH	1848–1916
KARL	1916–18

COMPARATIVE AREAS AND POPULATIONS OF THE LARGER EUROPEAN STATES

THERE are now in Europe four principal Slavonic States and languages, and we may note how these States compare, in population and in area, with the other States of Europe (the figures are only approximate). To take first the populations :

I.	1.	RUSSIA, after losing her western provinces, is still the most extensive country in Europe, and has the greatest population. Including the Ukraine, it is . . .	157,000,000
	2.	Germany	over 60,000,000
	3.	Great Britain	44,000,000
	4.	France	over 39,000,000
	5.	Italy	nearly 38,000,000
II.	6.	POLAND. . . .	about 28,000,000
	7.	Spain	over 21,000,000
	8.	Roumania . . .	about 17,000,000
III.	9.	CZECHOSLOVAKIA . .	over 13,500,000
IV.	10.	JUGOSLAVIA	12,000,000

Thus, in population, the four Slavonic States that have come out of the World War rank in the first ten of the twenty-nine states of Europe.

If we compare areas, the order is now as follows :

I. 1. Russia.
2. France.
3. Spain.
4. Germany.
5. Sweden.
6. Finland.

II. 7. Poland.
8. Norway.
9. Great Britain, if we include the Free State of Ireland.
10. Italy.
11. Roumania.

III. 12. Jugoslavia (or Great Britain, not including Ireland).
13. Greece.

IV. 14. Czechoslovakia.

So we see that Czechoslovakia is ninth as to population and fourteenth as to size.

The population is very dense in the northern half of Bohemia, in Silesia, and in parts of Moravia ; and thinly scattered in Slovakia and Ruthenia, where there is much mountain and forest-land.

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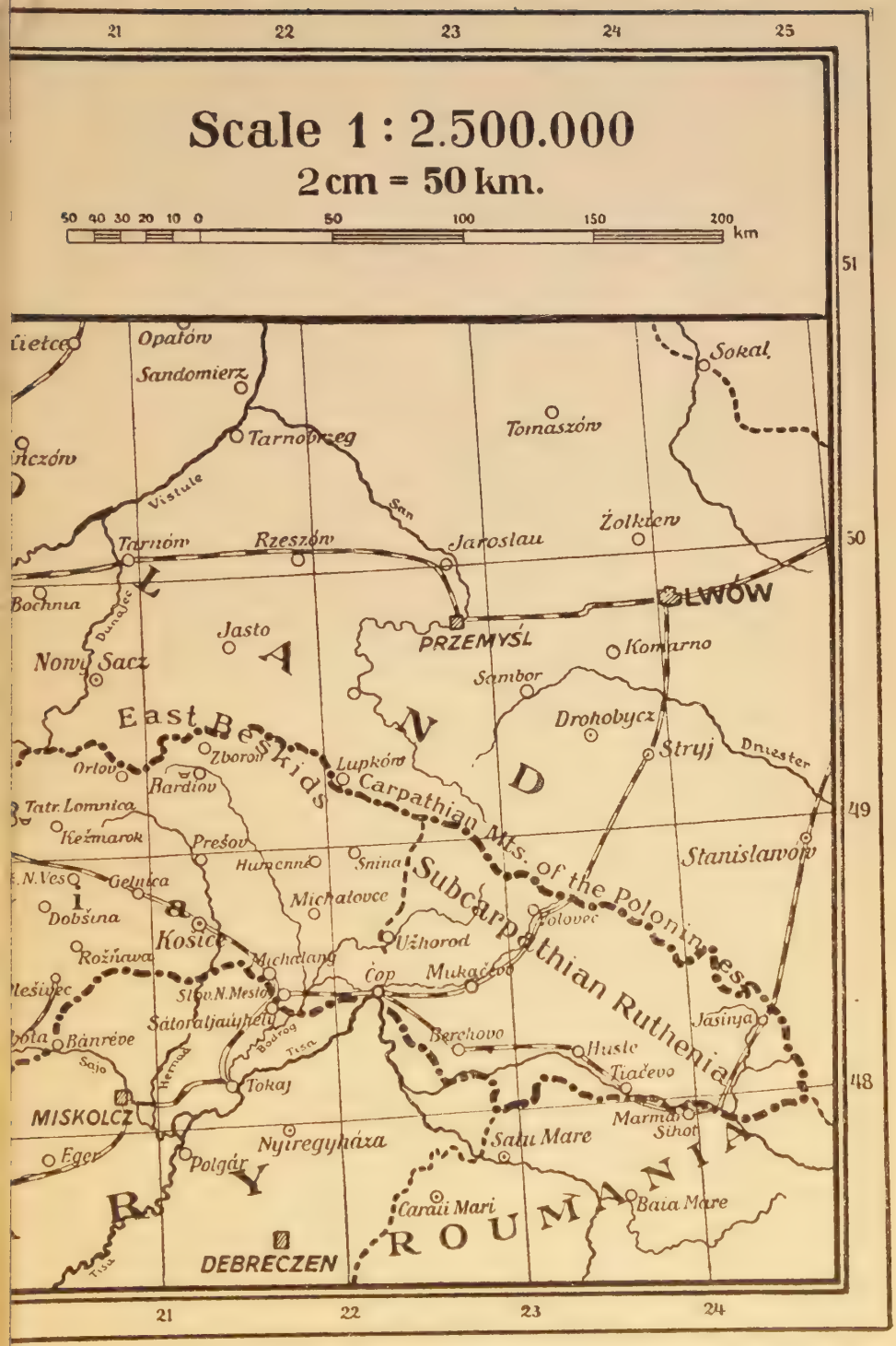
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